OPINION OF THE PRESS.

The Old School Presbyterian, St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 8, 1872, of which this Letter was published as a Supplement, gives the following editorial notice of it:

"OUR SUPPLEMENT.—Rev. Dr. Dickson, of the Committee from the Northern Assembly, asked our Synod to appoint a committee to state the causes which have led to our present position, and the obstacles to our union with the Assembly he represented.

"We do not know that we can better and more briefly describe our Supplement than by saying that it is, though not of purpose, a compliance with Dr. Dickson's request. It was designed, as its distinguished author asserts, to be laid before the Synod, at its recent meeting, had opportunity offered; and, therefore, it could not have been prepared specifically to give the information asked for by Dr. Dickson. Nevertheless, it is a statement of the causes which have led to our present position, and of the obstacles to our union with the Northern Assembly.

"And it is a clear, perfectly intelligible, masterly statement. Dr. Laws answers these two questions: '*How is it that the Synod of Missouri became isolated?*' and, '*Why cannot the Synod of Missouri connect itself with the General Assembly North?*' He answers them most courteously and most conclusively. We thank him, not only because he has calmly and plainly set forth our grievances, but also, and chiefly, because he has demonstrated, beyond cavil, that there is a vital, an irreconcilable difference between this Synod and the Northern Assembly as to *Presbyterianism and the nature and province of the Church.* We trust, therefore, that both our friends and our opponents will give Dr. Laws' 'Letter' a careful and impartial reading."

2

"A LETTER

BY THE

Rev. S. S. LAWS, LL. D.,

TO THE

SYNOD OF MISSOURI (O. S.)

WHICH MET AT

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, OCT. 8, 1872."

APPENDIX CONTINUED.

V.

Address to the Synod, by Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., and Response of Rev. John Montgomery, D. D., Moderator.

VI.

The Presbyterian.

VII.

The New York Presbytery.

New York City, March, 1873.

APPENDIX

(CONTINUED.)

V.

Address to the Synod, by Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., and response of Rev. John Montgomery, D. D., Moderator.

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, St. Louis, Mo., Nov.* 15, 1872.]

REV. CYRUS DICKSON, D. D., OF THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY, BEFORE THE SYNOD OF MISSOURI. (O. S.)

The *Herald and Presbyter* [of Cincinnati,] has the following:

"Rev. Dr. Cyrus Dickson, one of our Home Missionary Secretaries and the Permanent Clerk of our General Assembly, was present as a member of the Committee appointed by the Detroit Assembly to visit the Synod and open the way for the restoration of cordial relations looking to union. He was most kindly received, and though we have seen no report of his speech, we are sure, unless he was left to forget himself, that he spoke words of truth and love, in the spirit of the Master, that went into every ear and every heart, and poured out of many tearful eyes, making men feel that the time was short, and that we are all brethren, and that the ranks of Israel should be closed up for the great and imminent conflict which is upon the church."

"THE OLD SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN don't give us Dr. Dickson's speech."

We quote the foregoing, for several reasons. First, it is an acknowledgment, by one of our most unscrupulous opponents, that Dr. Dickson "was most kindly received." This would have been very strange, if (as some of Dr. D.'s friends seem to have surmised) his mission had been to a band of ruffians, far more ready to tear him to pieces than to treat him with gentlemanly courtesy. He impressed the Synod most favorably, and on the other hand, "his Christian spirit and greeting were," as Dr. Laws says in his *Letter*, "appreciated and reciprocated with a cordiality, manliness and candor that must have commanded his own admiration." Secondly, while Dr. Dickson acquitted himself eloquently, and "spoke words of truth and love, in the spirit of the Master, that went into every ear and every heart," it will be gathered from the Moderator's response

that the effect of our visitor's admirable remarks was not exactly as represented by the *Herald and Presbyter*. Thirdly, we have not given Dr. Dickson's speech, not because, as our dearly beloved brother Monfort seems to insinuate, we are afraid it might have much influence in furthering the union of the Synod and the Assembly, but simply because we have not been able to obtain a copy of it. Rather than attempt to report Dr. D.'s remarks, we preferred that he should speak for himself, and therefore we took pains to request him to reduce his address to writing. A similar request was made of other visiting brethren and of the Moderator, and was complied with. Dr. Dickson writes us, "The address, as to its language was extemporaneous, and my memory is unable to recall it with sufficient distinctness to reproduce it. I am sincerely sorry not to be able, therefore, to comply with your kind invitation."

The Dr. assured the Synod of the Assembly's fraternal regard—deplored the separation and its consequent alienations and troubles—expressed satisfaction with the action of Synod respecting union with the Southern and Reformed Churches—besought the Synod, in its movement for union, not to leave his Church "out in the cold"—and asked the Synod to appoint a committee to confer with a committee of which he is a member, concerning our grievances, &c., &c.

MODERATOR'S RESPONSE.

Dear Brother:—Suffer me, on behalf of the Old School Synod of Missouri, to give you the earnest grasp of Christian friendship, as the organ accredited to this Synod from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Let me say to you that this Synod feels the full force of what you have so pertinently uttered touching the sad divisions which, for mournful years, have distracted and torn and rent our unhappy churches. You have, with great clearness and unanswerable logic, deduced the lamentable evils which must, with inevitable certainty, flow from these most unfortunate divisions; and you have, with an unusual degree of earnestness, exhorted us to exert ourselves in prayer and effort toward healing these bleeding wounds in our beloved Zion.

My Brother, we acknowledge all you have so eloquently delivered. In our poor estimation, however, the half has not been told. Not only are our churches split and weakened almost unto death: not only is unholy strife indulged in, and a sad example set before the ungodly world; but even our poor missionary fields can find no rest. Take a single example. I myself organized a small and struggling church of some fifteen or twenty members, and very soon thereafter, a brother (?) came along, persuaded the people that (though sent by my Presbytery) I was not authorized to organize them—that, in fact, they were not organized in a constitutional manner, and proceeded to do the work over, placing a church of different connection on the same ground, using, in great part, the same material, and finally so conducting matters as to make it very doubtful whether either will ever prosper.

You speak of frankness: I will endeavor to be equally frank with yourself. My Brother, whence came all these sad influences and results? That is the question. There, too, rests the responsibility. We solemnly aver the work is not ours. Our present position is not of our choosing. We did all we could to avoid it. We stand to-day in relation to your Assembly, just where they put us—nay, in the posture into which they forced us. I was myself so grieved and overwhelmed by the sad disasters which came thick and fast upon us, that for a long time I knew not

what to do or where to go, and stood absolutely alone, without church relations. For years our Presbyteries claimed their place and their rights in our dear Old School mother church. Again and again we sent our delegates to the Assembly, to have them coldly and cruelly dismissed, and sent back to us—their seats denied, as recognized members in that venerable court. It is unnecessary to recount the sad history of the past further.

You speak of our "grievances." Ah! sir, grievances are slight matters—grievances we could bear: but your Assembly has put burdens on our consciences—insupportable burdens—which stern duty forbids us to tolerate. These intolerable burdens it is peculiarly fit and proper for your Assembly to lift from off us. When it may please the Assembly so to do, we shall rejoice. O, sir, I would gladly sacrifice this poor crippled right arm to have these agitations cease—these rude storms which beat so disastrously on the ark of God subside; and I think this Synod would join in such a sacrifice.

You speak of your Scotch blood. Well, I have the blood of an English mother coursing through my veins, which may impart to my composition something of stubborness. I may not,—and (I will undertake to say for this Synod,) they may not do violence to a Christian conscience. You tell us to appoint a committee to make known our grievances to the Assembly. The Synod can not persuade itself that the Assembly is at all ignorant in this respect. Besides it ill comports with either duty or dignity for this Synod to place itself in the attitude of one seeking terms with the Assembly which you represent. Go, my Brother, and tell your people, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison: and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out."

VI.

The Presbyterian.

[*The Presbyterian*, Philadelphia, Pa., Dec. 21st, 1872, contained the following EDITORIAL. "REV. M. B. GRIER, D. D., EDITOR."]

MISSOURI AND NEW YORK.

If our brethren of the Reformed church (Dutch) wish to know what manner of men are to be found in the Synod of Missouri, which proposes to be a party with them to a tripartite negotiation for union, and what spirit they are of, they will find some information, not very pleasant, but possibly useful to them, in two editorials contained in the *Old-school Presbyterian* of the 6th and 13th inst. After the late meeting of the Old-school Synod a correspondent of the *Presbyterian* gave a very succinct, and we believe correct statement of the state of things in

Missouri, and the relations existing between the two branches of the Presbyterian church in that State. Those of our readers who read the letter will remember that it contained nothing harsh in utterance; no words of scorn or contempt; nothing adapted to arouse the bitter feelings of the past; but that the writer expressed unfeigned regrets for the divisions which now exist, and his hope that a union of the dissevered portions might some day be accomplished.

This very quiet and candid epistle has thrown our contemporary at St. Louis into a most uncomfortable mood. Since the days of the war we have not seen such a sharp phillipic as the editorial of the *Old-school Presbyterian* of the 6th inst. We shall not quote it, or any part of it, and certainly shall not answer the furious scolding; but our readers may judge of the quality of the article when we may say that the writer sneers at the "piety" of our correspondent, in which he says he does not "take stock;" declares him to be "*rather* unscrupulous as to his facts;" asserts that his representations of occurrences in the late meeting were "false," and accuses our Synod of having "stolen churches," and having "tricked" them out of others. These and such like are the words of wrath which dance through the lines of this editorial. So blind is the writer in the violence of his feelings that he strikes at his own friends, and at the most prominent of them all. Our correspondent, in mentioning the fact that the Synod appointed a committee to confer with one from our Assembly, added that the "chairman of the Synod's committee, Rev. Dr. Brookes, is the most influential man in the Synod, and has it in his power to accomplish the union, if he himself consents to it." Whereupon the *Old-school Presbyterian* administers a caution to Dr. Brookes after the following delicate and refined manner:

"It may, or may not, be true that the 'Rev. Dr. Brookes is the most influential man in the Synod.' We are very 'independent' Presbyterians in this Old-school Synod, and are not inclined either to assume or to submit to leadership. But it is not true that Dr. Brookes, 'or any other man,' can accomplish the union of our Synod with the Northern Assembly. It is an insult to suppose it possible for Dr. Brookes to 'consent to it.' But were such a thing possible, and he should be so *great a simpleton* as to put his influence to so perilous a test, he would soon find himself in command of a forlorn company, consisting of—a captain."

We do not know whether the dignified and decorous Synod of the Reformed Church will desire closer union with men whose representative is capable of writing in the style of the *Old-school Presbyterian*, but certainly if they are in pressing need of a master of epithets, all that they have to do is to push on the "negotiations."

Another matter connected with the late meeting of the Old-school Synod of Missouri, and the approach made to that Synod by our Assembly, which deserves mention and some comment, is the pamphlet issued by the Rev. Dr. Laws, in which the relations between the General Assembly and the Synod of Missouri are discussed at length. Of this "letter" (it is addressed to the Synod of Missouri, Old-school, which met at Columbia, Missouri, October 8, 1872,) the North Carolina *Presbyterian* says that "the letter is, in some respects, *a singular production*." We propose to state some of the singularities which have struck us in reading this pamphlet.

Dr. Laws is in connection with the General Assembly of our Church. His pamphlet is simply a frantic effort to prevent the Synod of Missouri from joining the Church of which he is himself a minister. In this the production is undoubtedly "singular." Dr. Laws abides in quietness

during many years as a member of one of our Presbyteries; he passes through the union of the Old and New-school Churches; his name reappears on the new rolls, and no sign is given to the public that the position he has accepted is a disagreeable one. But the moment there appears to be a possibility that the Synod of Missouri will enter into negotiations with the Assembly which he recognizes as the Supreme Court of his Church, he rouses from his quietude, hies to Missouri, arrives too late to make the speech which he has prepared, but publishes it in twenty mortal columns of a newspaper, and then gives it the form of a pamphlet in which to circulate it more widely. We submit that there is something vastly "singular" in such a "production." An indictment of great length and carefully drawn is made against the Church which shelters the accuser, and this is laid at the bar of a foreign body, with the plea that this foreign body will have nothing to do with the corrupt Church to which the accuser belongs. Suppose that one of the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church in the city of New York had suddenly aroused himself and hurried to the late meeting of the General Synod or the German Reformed Synod in Cincinnati, and with labored arguments besought that Synod to refuse the proffered hand of the Dutch Church. Suppose that to give his plea point and force, he had gathered all the misdeeds and mistakes of the Church in which he ministered, for the past twenty years, and threw the unclean pile on the floor of the German Synod, might not some one there be expected to express his surprise at the "singular" performance? And would it not be a just retort if the accuser was met with the answer, "*You*, sir, at least, have no business with such an indictment in this presence. Whatever may be the truth or falsehood of your allegations, which we do not now intend to examine, it is an unseemly thing in you to come on such an errand. Your Church may be all that you say it is, but we have learned to think little of the man who uncovers the shame of his mother in the midst of strangers." What better has Dr. Laws done to the Church which keeps his name upon her rolls?

There is another thing which adds singularity to this production, which the public attack made upon the Church justifies us in mentioning. On the roll of the Presbytery of New York, Dr. Laws appears thus: "Samuel S. Laws, LL.D., W. C." Dr. Laws, if the reports which have reached us are correct, has laid aside entirely his ministerial functions. His daily business leads him to Wall Street. In other words, Dr. Laws is in the complete sense of the term a "secularized" minister. If we have been misinformed, and have done him injustice in saying this, we will be most happy to correct it. The "singular" thing which we wish to point out is that one so immersed in secularities should set himself forward to be the champion of a "spiritual" Church. It is because of the "*political*" character of the Church to which he belongs that he would guard the unworldly Missourians from contact with it. It has altogether gone astray, corrupting its ways with the decision of political questions, and secular debates, and so has descended from the high position of the pure "bride of Christ" to drag its white robes in the mire of party politics. And so entire is the defection that the only voice now heard for the "unspiritual" Church, the "kingdom that is not of this world," is the voice of one "crying in the wilderness" of New York. Dr. Laws intermits the noting of sales in the gold room for the utterance of a testimony against a "secular" Church and a political ministry.

We marvel greatly how he can pass from his post of witness-bearing in Wall Street to the secularities of the Presbytery of New York. If the

presence of Dr. Adams, or Dr. Hall, or Dr. Shedd, or Dr. Paxton, in the General Assembly would contaminate the representatives of the Old-school Synod of Missouri, are not the garments of the brother from the Stock Exchange defiled when he passes away from that pure and peaceful region to the political contentions of his fellow presbyters? We do not sit in judgment on Dr. Laws for ceasing to make the ministry a great business. To his own Master he stands or falls. We do not reproach him for seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits which are honest and lawful. We determine nothing as to his duty, and will not measure his responsibilities. But when a "secularized" minister steps forth to defame the Church which gives him the minister's name, and heaps words of reproach upon the men who are his peers, that he may thus lengthen out the day of strife and division, we tell him that from him at least all such words are an impertinence which all good men can afford to pass unanswered. There are those in the Church whose lead we will willingly follow even when they show the errors of the Church. When any, in any quarter, strive sincerely to reclaim the Church from what they believe to be a serious defection from her principles of order or faith, we will give them candid hearing, and our assent if they convince our judgment. But they must not come from the midst of crowds of men, grasping eagerly for that which is worldly and sordid. While we hope that we would be ready to greet the prophet of the "spiritual" Evangel wherever he appears, if he brings the signs of a prophet with him, we certainly do not expect to see him issuing forth from the purlieus of the New York Gold Room.

[The Old School Presbyterian, St. Louis, Mo., Dec. 27th, 1872, contained the following Answer to the above Editorial.]

FURIOUS—WEAK.

A crack has occurred in the crust of dullness which encases the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. Out of the crack has shot up a remarkably lively display—"sound and fury." Really, we are surprised—and truly, we are pleased—at this show of vigor in our stupidly staid contemporary. Long life to him, and vast improvement in manners and morals!

In his last issue, under the heading, "Missouri and New York," he devotes a column and a half to very savage and very mean abuse of us and of Dr. Laws. The larger portion of this highly concentrated wrath is poured out upon Dr. Laws, for having written the *Letter* which appeared as a Supplement to this paper, and to which frequent reference has been made. Other people have highly commended the temper and language as well as the argument of that *Letter*. But the Philadelphia *Presbyterian* is not restrained, rather is exasperated by the Doctor's mildness and courtesy, and takes no notice whatever of the argument. Calling upon his imagination for the facts as to how the *Letter* originated, he describes it, of course falsely, as "simply a frantic effort to prevent the Synod of Missouri from joining the Northern Church." We say, that, of course, this is false. There was no reason why any sane man should attempt to prevent any such thing. There was no tendency in

the Synod toward the Northern Church. One man, indeed, ventured to breathe a syllable for union in that direction, but he was charitably looked upon as somewhat beside himself. And we think that, since then, he himself has come to a wiser mind.

The *Presbyterian* has, we repeat, nothing to reply to Dr. Laws' reasoning. It seeks to parry his tremendous logic by *breaking him down.* It calls him hard names, such as "secularized" minister, and insinuates that (like one of its special friends, the late D. V. McLean) he has too familiar acquaintance with "the ways that are dark and the tricks that are vain" down in Wall Street. Dr. Laws is able to defend himself, and he may see fit to make that ability felt by the editor who writes of him that when he, "a secularized minister, steps forth to defame the Church which gives him the minister's name, and heaps words of reproach upon the men who are his peers, that he may thus lengthen out the day of strife and division, we tell him that, from him at least, all such words are an impertinence which all good men can afford to pass unanswered."

The occasion of the *Presbyterian's* abuse of ourselves is the strictures we made upon "N.'s" communication to that journal respecting our Synod's late meeting. The surmise that Dr. Nicolls is the author of that communication seems to be correct. His silence is a confession that he wrote it. He is unwilling to retract. He has no explanation to make. He dare not take up the cudgel himself, but, wondrously cunning man! he puts it upon his friend of the *Presbyterian* to battle for him.

That doughty champion assumes the *role* of respectability and moderation—declares that our article was an exceedingly sharp phillipic and that we use very vituperative "epithets," saying that his Synod "stole" some of our churches and "tricked" us out of others. All we have to say is, that we used those obnoxious words deliberately. They express accurately what was done. They describe precisely what plain, honest men understand by thieving and trickery. Perhaps, were our pen guided by the dainty hand and informed by the faultless taste of the very respectable gentleman whose nerves are so shocked by our naughty words, we might say that the churches alluded to were embezzled from us or obtained under false pretences: but in the untamed rudeness of our soul, we prefer the plain Saxon terms to describe such penitentiary offences. Ah, neighbor! it isn't the *epithets* that hurt—(your abuse of Dr. Laws shows that you are an adept in that line)—but it is the facts: and these facts we can prove to you, and that your correspondent "N." had a great hand in them.

The Presbyterian, for purposes of its own, distorts the allusion we made to Dr. Brookes, in reply to "N.'s" insulting suggestion that Dr. Brookes should consent to a union between this Synod and the Northern Church. We did not "strike at" Dr. Brookes. We did not "caution" him. We have no occasion to do either. He and we are of one mind in these matters. He and we know you and your peculiar tactics very well, and we thoroughly appreciate your present effort to make the impression that there is not perfect harmony between us.

But we must dismiss this mild-mannered and ingenuous editor. He says that we had no cause to speak severely of "N.'s" communication. Listen! He says "it contained nothing harsh in utterance; no words of scorn or contempt; nothing adapted to arouse the bitter feelings of the past." Can this be so? Were we so egregiously mistaken? Was it not a member of the Northern Church who first called our attention to "N.'s" article, and reprobated it? Was it not denounced to us by two others in that connection? Does not "N." say, falsely, that the vote on ecclesi-

astical relations was taken before Dr. Dickson's arrival, "on purpose that the message of peace borne by Dr. Dickson might produce no division?" Is there nothing in the following extract, as a sample, to wound our brethren? Is there no contempt intended for the religious views of some of them? Is there no sneering accusation of an utter lack of principle by all of the three parties into which "N." divides the Synod?

"But the danger was avoided by a happy stroke of policy. This was to appoint a committee to take part in the proposed negotiations between the Dutch Reformed and the Southern Church. It was discovered by the Southern party that the Dutch Church was old, that it had no future, and must grow smaller; that it was very rich, in fact, as was stated, 'had more money than it knew what to do with.' True, like the Northern Assembly, it had made deliverances on the war question, but it had money, and could this union be accomplished the reproach of a sectional church would be washed away from them. Therefore they were in favor of this union. The 'stand still party' were in favor of these negotiations because it meant stand still for at least two years more, and in the meantime who knows what might turn up? The Lord might come and take the elect body home. The Northern party were also in favor of appointing the committee to enter into these negotiations because it gave them time, and they were assured that next year would find the number in favor of uniting with the Assembly greater than now. They agreed that there was no prospect of the proposed union with the Dutch Church, for first of all, the Presbyterians were not willing to go over to the Dutch Church; and second, that if the Dutch Church wished to unite with Presbyterians they would first of all endeavor to heal the schism in Christ's body at home, and unite with the brethren they had known, and loved, and trusted for years in their own midst. So all voted for the appointment of the committee, and the danger of division was avoided for another year."

Evidently "N." has written about the Synod of Missouri, under the supposition that its members are such as he is himself, and the *Presbyterian* endorses the supposition.

Evidently, too, the purpose of these men is to prevent the union of the Southern Church, the Reformed Church and this Synod. Gentlemen, we understand you.

[*From the Philadelphia Presbyterian, January* 18, 1873.]

DR. S. S. LAWS AND HIS PAMPHLET.

A FEW weeks ago we referred, in our editorial columns, to a pamphlet which had just been issued by the Rev. S. S. Laws, LL. D., a member of the Presbytery of New York, containing a letter to the Synod of Missouri, (Old School,) which met at Columbia, Missouri, October 8, 1872. This "Letter" we criticised as we thought it deserved, viewing it as the effort of a minister of our Church to hinder or frustrate the effect of a friendly overture made by the General Assembly to which he owed allegiance, to the Old-school Synod of Missouri. We said, further, that as Dr. Laws was himself deeply immersed in secular pursuits in the city of New York, it did not become him to set himself forth as the champion of a "spiritual" Church, or as the utterer of a comprehensive

condemnation of his own Church because of its "secular" and "political" deliverances.

Dr. Laws has sent to us a printed defence of himself and of his pamphlet, which he asks may be inserted in the *Presbyterian*. We respectfully decline, mainly for two reasons, each of which would be sufficient of itself.

1. Our criticisms occupied about one column of the *Presbyterian*—Dr. Laws' reply would fill *six*, and probably run to nearly *seven* columns of our paper. The disproportion is much too great. We do not know any man in the Presbyterian Church to whom we would give *six* continuous columns of the *Presbyterian* for the discussion of any subject, personal or otherwise.

2. Dr. Laws uses language in regard to the editor of this paper which must necessarily exclude him from the use of our columns. We shall not attempt to quote what Dr. Laws is pleased to say of us, and of our criticisms of his pamphlet. It is enough to say that he denounces us as actuated by wrath, malice and all uncharitableness, in our editorial comments upon the "Letter." We can hardly think that, after filling six columns with such bitter denunciations, he *could* expect us to be the vehicle of transmitting them to the world. There are some assailants on whom every man has the right to shut the doors of his office, or the columns of his journal. If Dr. Laws had chosen to send a reply as to our editorial somewhat in proportion to its length, and written in becoming language, we would undoubtedly have published it. But the long and abusive article which he has forwarded to us we most decidedly decline.

Our controversy with Dr. Laws is not a personal one. We have no reason to doubt that he has discharged the offices conferred on him, either by State or Church, well. Our contest with him grows wholly out of the fact that in a pamphlet, carefully prepared, with a view of laying it before the Synod of Missouri (Old-school) "in a printed form," Dr. Laws arraigned the Church of which he was a minister as guilty of "conduct" of a "revolutionary, insubordinate, and destructive character," by which "the General Assembly broke up the relations of the Synod of Missouri to it, misled the civil courts to divest it of property, created a discordant element by misguiding some of its own members, erected on the same territory a rival Synod, &c., &c., (p. 32.) To all this some one might have said in answer that these were the acts of the General Assembly of the Old-school Church, whose existence had ceased, and that the committee which the Synod of Missouri had received was from the Assembly of a new Church, not responsible for the acts of either of the Churches out of which it was constituted. But Dr. Laws repels this suggestion. He asserts (p. 40,) that the "United Assembly is the worthy *successor and heir* of the Assembly whose assumption of power your Synod (*i.e.*, Synod of Misssouri,) so long resisted, and which completely revolutionizes our Presbyterial system, overthrows our ecclesiastical liberty, and resolves the Assembly into a spiritual despotism."

Another suggestion which might be made in the way of palliation, Dr. Laws as decidedly repels. It might be said that the Southern Presbyterian Church had fallen into the same errors, and indulged in some "secular" deliverances. No, says Dr. Laws, their errors were slight and only temporary. "The surprise is," we quote from his pamphlet, "that its garment of praise, as a spiritual body, was not burned up instead of being only scorched a little, and having upon it only the smell of fire." As for the Synod of Missouri (Old School), Dr. Laws' admiration can find no expression save in such great swelling words as these:

"I frankly confess, that as I gaze and reflect upon the position of your little band, its moral sublimity fills me with admiration and thanksgivings, and I feel borne aloft by the conviction that for all your affliction and trials, in the midst of which the hearts of some may have sickened and the knees of others weakened, God has in store for you some glorious reward. Founded on the Rock of Ages, standing upon the old foundation unmoved amidst the surging billows that have broken over you and carried others from their moorings, the eyes of the Christian world are turned towards you with admiration and rejoicing."

It is marvellous with what dexterity Dr. Laws finds everything to approve in churches outside of his own, and everything to condemn within the fold of which he is a minister. Everything true and right—everything lovely and of good report—belongs to the bodies in which he sits only by courtesy; everything that is false and evil is to be found in the church on whose rolls his name is found. A more singular case of studied disloyalty to the communion of which he is a minister and member, we have never seen or heard of.

It is a small matter comparatively to say that when Dr. Laws wrote the pamphlet which is so complete an indictment against the church to which he belongs, and so thorough an acquittal of all the churches which have separated from it, he was a member of the New York Gold Room. Yet it adds very much to the singularity of this plea for the "spiritual," and this condemnation of the least taint of the "secular" in the acts of the church, that it should come from that quarter. Without at all condemning Dr. Laws for his daily employment, or affirming that his presence there was inconsistent with his calling as a minister of Christ, we are very clear in the conviction that the fact should have imposed silence upon him in the controversies of the church.

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, January* 24, 1873.]

WILL NOT GIVE HIM A HEARING.

The Philadelphia *Presbyterian* recently made a savage onslaught on Dr. Laws for his "Letter to the Synod of Missouri." We referred to it two or three weeks ago. It did not claim to be an attempt to answer the Doctor's argument. It was not a courteous dissent from his unexceptionably expressed positions. It was a virulent personal assault—terribly abusive.

Dr. Laws has prepared a defence of himself and requested its insertion in the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. This very reasonable request has been curtly refused and for very insufficient reasons. One reason is that Dr. Laws' reply is so long: another is, that it is taken up with bitter denunciation of the editor who vilified him.

Fair minded men will not form a very favorable idea of the editor who uses his position to assail mercilessly a Christian gentleman, and then declines to give that gentleman a hearing in his own defense, for reasons puerile and exaggerated. And those who read that merciless assault will be amazed (or not amazed?) that said editor further justifies his refusal to publish Dr. Laws' defense, on the ground that his "controversy

with Dr. Laws is not a personal one"! Pray, what is it then? What did the Philadelphia editor say, *in reply to Dr. Laws' Letter* but that Dr. Laws is a minister without charge, a "secularized" minister, "a member of the New York Gold Room," who therefore, was presumptuous, impertinent, to speak of the Church as he did? This strikes us as—just a little—personal.

REV. DR. LAWS.— * * The *Philadelphia Presbyterian* while refusing to publish the reply of Dr. Laws to its assault upon him, proceeded at the same time to make an extended comment on the suppressed article! Such an idea of fair play we hope does not widely prevail among the editorial fraternity.

Central Presbyterian, Richmond, Va.

[The ANSWER of "Dr. Laws," which was SUPPRESSED by *The Phila. Presbyterian.*]

For The Presbyterian.

"MISSOURI AND NEW YORK."

DR. LAWS' REPLY.

"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!"—Luke vi: 26.

MR. EDITOR:—The reason of this communication is to be found wholly in this one fact, viz.: That the leading *Editorial* of *The Presbyterian*, Dec. 21, 1872, a column and a half in length, under the above heading, devotes *an entire column* to "Dr. Laws."

The word "Missouri" of this caption covers a half column in defense of its St. Louis correspondent "N." against a criticism of the *St. Louis Presbyterian* to the effect that "N." had travestied the state of affairs in the Synod of Missouri, (O. S.) and the motives prompting its late action on ecclesiastical relations; the said correspondence and the defense being both understood and appreciated in that quarter as attempts to scatter apples of discord in the midst of the brethren of that Synod and also of its present movements for more intimate relations with other ecclesiastical bodies. "Blessed are the peace makers; for they shall be called the children of God." The able editor of the *St. Louis Presbyterian* who, by the way, is a working *pastor*, is certainly entitled to be esteemed by the public when speaking of the internal affairs of his own Synod, with which no one can be better acquainted, as entitled to higher confidence and respect than the effusion of any anonymous and unfriendly correspondent of *The Philadelphia Presbyterian*. But that paper is abundantly competent to vindicate itself.

Borne along by the tempest of unfriendly passion stirred up by this controversy with another paper, *The Presbyterian* tacks about from West to East, heads to "New York," and boldly and desperately sets its beak *to run down Dr Laws*, at all hazards. His name had not so much as been alluded to in the discussion, and he was a mere spectator of the tournament. Why then should the lists be broken and a lance with envenomed point be laid in rest for him? Why should a thunder bolt from the angry clouds of blackened wrath that raved through the brain of this redoubtable champion of an *anonymous* correspondent in St. Louis, leap forth to smite down "Dr. Laws" in New York city? The answer is, because, forsooth, six weeks previously Dr. Laws had addressed a certain *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri which has found great favor there as well as elsewhere. *The Old School Presbyterian*, St. Louis, published that Letter as a supplement Nov. 8, 1872. It discusses avowedly in the true interests of *union*, the independent position and the ecclesiastical relations of that Synod, not a *dead* but a *living issue;* in fact the living issue of the hour amongst the Presbyterians of America.

So far as known, it is the only attempt as yet made to discuss this issue strictly in the light of the ethical, Scriptural, ecclesiastical and legal principles it so strikingly embodies, the history of the church scarcely affording a parallel instance. But independently of all comment, the collection of authentic facts and documents contained in that pamphlet of over one hundred pages, and which enable the reader to form his own opinion as he goes along, is really of great value and well worth having, and is not otherwise readily accessible even to ministers.

Query: In carnal warfare at sea, suppose the builder of a vessel to be run down, is it to be accepted as a necessary consequence that the vessel itself is run down? or if, on land, it is proposed to blow up and destroy a fort, whether built of mud or masonry, is it enough to blow up the man who built it? If so, then *The Presbyterian* has not rendered itself ridiculous in attempting to destroy this document by destroying the author and compiler of it. That *Letter* is entitled to stand upon its own merits were its authorship unknown.

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again;
"The eternal years of God are hers."

Whether this *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri, which is declared to be the *occasion* of this attack is true or false, it is explicitly said, "we do not now intend to examine." Perhaps such examination would have been the wiser course. What *The Presbyterian* sets before the eyes of all its readers under such an imposing caption and with so much prominence, does not pretend, therefore, to be an answer to the *Letter*, as it certainly is not in fact, but it is an avowed personal assault with the manifest purpose of destroying the influence of the *Letter* by destroying its author. The principle of the argument is precisely that of the supercilious and arrogant Pharisees in

dealing with a poor man who bore a truthful and important testimony on a subject of great consequence even to *them* and of which he had some knowledge; but his testimony being distasteful to them, they vainly attempted to squelch it in the following summary way: "They (the Pharisees who were then in a majority in the synagogue and carried things with a high hand) answered and said unto him, *Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* And they cast him out." Jno. ix. The Presbyterian church has suffered enough from this sort of thing for a check to be put upon it. This style is not altogether suited, in this age, to either individuals or church courts.

Had the strictures referred to, however severe, been confined to the *Letter* itself, they would have elicited no answer from me, for I can well afford, as will more fully appear, to leave *it* to take care of itself. But the editorial in question is so completely saturated and surcharged with offensive personality as to make an answer, *in self defence*, a plain duty, however disagreeable it may be. I shall endeavor not to follow the bad example set before me, but to bear in mind the injunctions of that sacred Book which we both profess to receive and to preach to others as an authoritative *rule of action:* "Be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing."

It ought to startle somewhat the readers of *The Presbyterian*, who are accustomed to peruse its original matter with some measure of respect and confidence, to be assured, positively, that *there is not a single allegation or charge against Dr. Laws*, in the lengthy *Editorial* in question, *that is not false. Not one.* From the first to the last, from the egg to the apple of this feast of editorial abuse, whoever may be responsible for it, it is an unmitigated tissue of misrepresentation. It all hangs on the brittle thread of an *if:*—"IF the reports which have reached us are correct." Truly is it oft repeated by Shakespeare that "*if*" is a philosopher—a great philosopher; and a deceitful and licentious jugglery of that particle may transmute angels into demons and the ministers of Satan into apostles of light. Who may not be thus traduced? To the extent that this *Editorial* represents any reports respecting Dr. Laws, or his Letter, they are *not* "correct;" and a very little trouble would have established their falsity and saved this unseemly editorial exhibition.

To notice some of the particulars:

1. The "daily business" of Dr. Laws does *not* "lead him to Wall Street," as is therein so pompously proclaimed to the world for its enlightenment and his disgrace. *The Presbyterian* ought to be better informed on what it speaks of so oracularly. And yet, the daily business of others, Christian men, too, as good as either Dr. Laws or his accuser, does lead them there and even into the "purlieus" of the Gold and Stock Exchanges, which organizations, at this great centre of the financial world, are now just as necessary as church organizations are in the

religious world. Business men who understand these matters, look on preachers who abuse these organizations and the men who do business in them and then come to their offices with bland countenances, soliciting pecuniary aid for church enterprises with about the same amiability as preachers look on worldlings who, whilst enjoying its blessings, yet in the excess of their blind and indiscriminate prejudice, abuse the church and its members. "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the Evil."

2. Again: This remarkable *Editorial* says; "We do not reproach Dr. Laws for seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits which are honest and lawful." For what, then, does it reproach him? If it is meant to be insinuated, as it certainly seems to be, that he is not only engaged in "secular pursuits," but in those which are not "honest and lawful," the suggestion is *atrocious.* The fact is, he does not seek, and (in the good providence of God,) he has no occasion "for seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits" of any kind, nor by any other kind of pursuits, whether in Wall street or elsewhere, whether in the ministry or out of it, whether in the church, or out of it. He neither entered the church nor the ministry, nor has he continued in either, nor ever Demas-like forsaken either for *bread and butter considerations;* but, with a noted example before him, of one whose enemies and traducers (ministers, too, in the church) sought to destroy his influence by holding *him* up to ridicule and contempt, Dr. Laws makes bold to affirm, and if need be, to challenge the disproof of it, that he has suffered and sacrificed more for the sake of his ministry than any man who dares to stand forth as his accuser. Sooner than compromise his integrity and sacred rights as a minister of the church of Christ, and "drag its white robes in the mire of party politics," he willingly endured imprisonments, banishment, exile, sickness and sufferings,* from which, as a relief, death would have been hailed by him, (as it was by his beloved spiritual father, Dr Potts,) as "*the most joyful news of his life!*"—"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me, for I ought to have been commended of you." I am profoundly conscious of my own unworthiness; but I cannot be insensible to the deep wrong that is attempted to be done me.

In vindication of himself against every representation or insinuation made covertly or openly, to his injury or prejudice as a man or as a minister, by associating his name with any business transaction, enterprise, organization or association, in New York or elsewhere, before he entered the ministry, or since, Dr. Laws *fearlessly* challenges investigation. Allow the remark that Dr. Laws, whilst for many years President of the Synodical College of Missouri, and dis-

* Brought on me by the damp, exposure and ill fare of the prisons; and these excruciating rheumatic tortures continued to gnaw into my very bones for about two years.

charging the duties of his Chair, that of "*Metaphysics and Sacred Literature*," acting as chaplain and preaching constantly, managed, at the same time, the entire financial affairs of that institution. His busines experience, whether in his own behalf or in behalf of the church, whether previous to that or since, has been attended with success: and he may be excused for saying that he feels a conscious pride in the *spotless record* that he has left in business circles.

3. Again: "Dr. Laws, if the reports which have reached us are correct, has laid aside entirely his ministerial functions." "IF" is *surely* a philosopher. Dr Laws is happy to inform you once more, that your "reports" are *not* "correct;" that he has *not*, as is here so injuriously asserted, done any such thing; and that he has no idea of so doing; but that, on the contrary, he exercises those functions as opportunity, or occasion offers. Many of your readers need not to be told this. He conceives that he has his own appointed work to do, and has sought quietly to attend to his own business in such a way as to give a good account to the Master, and to be no hindrance to others in doing the same. If he had a tithe of the vain ambition to appear before the public, often misnamed a desire of usefulness which seems to actuate some others, perhaps more, and more correct information might be reported of him. Men who are given to much talking, sometimes make a great mistake when they suppose that they do all the *thinking* as well; and that by their much talking and writing, they acquire a sort of prescriptive right to do it *all*. Those who "abide in quietness during many years" often have more real reason to speak than the noisy ones; and the prisoner at the bar, heavily indicted both *for keeping quiet and for speaking*, pleads ignorance, and throws himself on the mercy of the court, solemnly averring that he was not aware that any minister or member of the Presbyterian church, did, by keeping his mouth closed during a protracted and heated contest, till all others had had the floor, thereby forfeit all right to be heard upon the subject, and incur the penalty of ostracism for having had the temerity and presumption to entertain and to utter views at variance with those of the majority in his synagogue. "And they cast him out" from the synagogue, which had 'sheltered the accuser,' and, 'kept his name upon her rolls.' Perhaps there were those around, of like passions, who said: "They *served him right.*"

Beg pardon, Mr. Editor; but if the question of *secularisation* is to receive *general* discussion, this editorial being only an entrance upon it, there is a point that should not be overlooked. On the roll of the General Assembly our Dr Grier appears thus: "Matthew B. Grier, D. D., Editor." That is all; he is not even an ordinary "W. C." and does not appear as exercising any ministerial functions whatever. Where is the Scriptural or constitutional warrant for "*Editor*" as a presbyter and an or-

dained functionary of the church? What has custom or sufferance to do with the matter?

"Mr. Editor" lives in a glass house, and is enrolled as a *secularised minister*. And it does occur whether any "Mr. Editor," who could so far forget himself as to perpetrate such an offense against the rules of public discussion, and of genteel journalism as is exhibited in this abusive *Editorial*, ought not seriously to consider the propriety and duty of laying aside entirely, all claim to something more than his ministerial functions? Thank thee for the words: "We do not sit in judgment on [Mr. Editor,] for ceasing to make the ministry a great business. To his own Master he stands or falls. We do not reproach him for seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits which are honest and lawful. We determine nothing as to his duty, and will not measure his responsibilities." But, perhaps "*editor*" comes under the head of "teacher;" then, in the present instance, at least, to the Litany for relief: From *all such*,

"*Good Lord, deliver us.*

"From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy: from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,

"*Good Lord, deliver us.*"

If you will turn back to the file of *The Presbyterian* for March, 1872, you will find a communication under the caption "W. C." and signed W. C. It is believed that it *first* published the suggestion of abating the evil of "W. C.s" by means of some general intermediary of intelligence between them and the vacant churches,—an *idea* that subsequently attracted some attention in the papers, Presbytery and Assembly. That communication was written by "Dr. Laws" and you are now requested to republish it over his proper signature as subscribed hereto.

The General Assembly, 1802, "Resolved that if any minister, *by providential circumstances*, becomes incapable of exercising his ministerial functions, the Presbytery are to inspect his conduct, that he do not neglect his ministerial duties, beyond what his circumstances render unavoidable." "From this position the Assembly, in both its forms, has never deviated." At the regular meeting of the Presbytery last spring, the usual time, the statement of Dr. Laws, with that of others was made to his Presbytery and passed upon. Conceding that Dr. Laws deserved to be called to account, as to the exercise of his ministerial functions, yet by fitly applying an epithet unhesitatingly applied to him by *The Presbyterian*, it may be asked, has *it* not, in assuming to itself this task, been guilty of "*impertinence?*"

4. "And what shall I say more?" This *Editorial* exults in its work. Dr. Laws is misrepresented, caricatured, derided and burlesqued by being depicted in ridiculous attitudes, and placed in false relations, of course, most fraternally. The stunning influence of certain tremendous

names is as freely invoked as if there was given by these gentlemen an open policy for so doing, in order to overshadow and overwhelm, as if by their sanction the devoted object of this wrathful vituperation,—but the opinion is ventured that these deservedly eminent divines could not have regarded it otherwise than as an unwarrantable liberty, to attempt to prop up with their names the dignity and propriety of an unmanly and discreditable diatribe of personal abuse. In the face of fact; and in contradiction of abounding evidence in its own columns, this *Editorial* represents that "the only voice now heard" against obstacles in the way, *not* of a conglomeration, but, as is set forth in that *Letter*, of a *true union* on principle, is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness of New York," from the midst of the "purlieus" of its business circles, whence this "*Jupiter tonans*" decrees that a prophet from the Lord "must not come." Poor Nazareth! the glory of thy degradation has departed. Were it true that the voice of Dr. Laws is *the only one* raised against the errors in question, it would be his *honor*, let that voice issue whence it might; but it is not true. Neither is it true that Dr. Laws has represented that the church "has altogether gone astray;" nor has he reproached his Presbytery or any of its members, with "secularities" and "political contentions." The controversy is with our General Assembly's deliverances, and to which his Presbytery has not given adhesion. The error of this *Editorial*, both as to its matter and spirit, as to the *Letter* and its author, is congenital and inwrought into its entire warp and woof. By allowing much of it to pass unnoticed, there is some solace in the reflection that certain poisons are sometimes given in such doses as prove their own antidotes, *no thanks* to the unskilful administrator in whose blundering ignorance there is no more safety, than in a vicious purpose to destroy life.

5. It must not be overlooked that the stereotyped offer of a certain class of newspaper writers, is couched in the usual form, to wit: "If we have been misinformed, and have done him injustice in saying this, we will be most happy to correct it." Ordinarily the public does not need information as to the happiness of the writers of such *Editorials* in correcting their mistakes. They are seldom known to be wrong, in their own opinion; and of course they have the last word, and any attempt to set them right is made at great disadvantage, unless it be by other Editors of like privileges with themselves. It should rather be an Editor's happiness, one would think, not to need correction. But what is the virtue or the value of such an assurance as this? Let this set phrase be viewed in connection with the circumstances, manner, matter and spirit of the performance over which it is spread, as a thin and feeble excuse, and then let it pass for just what it is worth.

The following incident occurred in Missouri during the late war. A band of reckless soldiers fired on a man peacefully and quietly attending

to his own appropriate business whilst following his plow in the field, broke his leg and otherwise injured him. On going up to him, and finding that he was not the man they had supposed—*that they had acted on incorrect information*—why, they begged his pardon and expressed their regret! This was more like a mockery than an atonement for the injury. Such conduct was inexcusable. A very little trouble and that without any great inconvenience or the slightest risk, would have corrected the false and injurious impression on which they so wickedly acted. Every right-minded person must condemn such conduct. But *character* is of more value than bodily limbs or life itself; and society will ever adjudge that man who wantonly attacks and attempts to destroy it, as the worst of assassins. Business men soon become familiarised, and no public man is excusable for not being acquainted with this one of the elementary rules of evidence, viz.: that every case held up for judgment must be sustained by the best evidence of which the nature of the case will admit; and hence with scarcely an exception, *hearsay* is excluded as utterly unreliable, even under oath, when the rights and interests of a fellow man are at stake. The lawyer who should venture to ignore this inexorable rule of fair dealing and justice in the practice of his profession, would inevitably disgrace himself with his professional brethren and likewise in the eye of the court and before the public. There is wonderful appositeness in our Saviour's instructions which it may be well to lay to heart: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? * * Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Matt. vii., 1–3. 5. When Job's friends who, with a false theory of his case, misjudged God's sore providences towards him of which they had personal knowledge and undertook to make him out, whilst still in the midst of his afflictions and on that very account, a worse man than his neighbors, he felt in his soul that it was not true, and hence he stoutly and brusquely repelled their foolish and false representations, thus: "And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you!" * * "What ye know the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace, and it should be your wisdom." Job xii., 1–2; xiii., 2–5. But the same man who could thus protest his integrity in the presence of his fellow men, when he lifted his eyes heavenward, was humbled into the dust: "Now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

6. Special attention is asked to two more characteristic passages from this *Editorial*. One is in these words: "But when a secularised minister steps forth to *defame the church* which gives him the minister's name, and *heaps words of reproach upon the men* who are his peers, *that he may thus lengthen out the day of strife and division*, we tell him that from him at least all such words are an *impertinence* which all good men can afford to pass unanswered." (The *italics* are mine.) Those who have read this remarkable *Editorial* of Dec. 21st, 1872, will not fail to recall that this is rather a mild specimen of its unamiable spirit, harsh utterances and words of contempt and scorn.

The gravity of the charge here so overbearingly made consists chiefly in this, that Dr. Laws is held up as *a defamer of the church*. Mr. Editor, his *Letter* is in your hands; it is, also, in the hands of thousands, many of whom are readers of *The Presbyterian*. He makes a *demand* of you, therefore, which the publishers of that paper and every reader of it in the world will recognise *his right* to make and *your imperative obligation* to answer. That demand is this: *That you either make good this offensive accusation or retract it*, at the *peril* of being yourself branded a *slanderer*.

This is a perfectly simple, reasonable issue. The *Letter* is in your hands, and is the sole ground on which this heavy indictment is based. Is that published *Letter* such as to fix on him the stigma of defaming the Presbyterian church? If not, then this *Editorial* is such as to brand its author a slanderer. Dr. Laws is no novice, no upstart in his ecclesiastical relations. He is a member of the Presbyterian church of about 30 years' standing and an ordained minister in it of more than 20 years' standing. He originally united with Dr. W. S. Potts' church, St. Louis, Mo., in the spring of 1843; and was ordained and installed pastor of one of the churches of St. Louis, in the fall of 1851, by "the original Presbytery" of St. Louis, of the Old School Synod of Missouri, with which Synod, therefore, he was more or less intimately connected for about 25 years, so that he needed no introduction in that quarter: and no apology for addressing the *Letter* as he did, seems to have been required beyond that given (p. 77), and so far as heard from, so cordially accepted. But he is egregriously mistaken if any part of the Presbyterian church will accord to you or any other man, in such a case of character as this specific issue involves, the arrogant prerogative of a Pythagorean *Ipse dixit*. To the *proof*: and let there be no *garbling*, nor unfair dealing with it.*

Please make good, also, the charge of casting "*reproach*." He had supposed himself innocent of doing so, having conscientiously endeavored

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* See page 111 for the "Editor's" covert attempt but disgraceful failure (in his comment on this *suppressed* answer,) to make good his infamous accusation.

to speak only the words of truth and soberness, without prejudice and with perfect fairness and candor, consulting neither fear nor favor.

The *assertion*, that Dr. Laws made in his *Letter* a "public attack on the church," is hardly worth notice, as it is equally destitute of proof, adduced or adduceable. On the contrary, the church, to the best of his ability, is *defended* by him, the thing attacked being an *error*, and with the view of its overthrow and eradication. You had just as well charge the physician who attacks a dangerous *disease* in your system with attacking yourself. The right of free discussion, the right of canvassing the acts of church courts, even the highest, cannot be denied, no, not even to the humblest layman, though his daily business should lead him to Wall Street.

Taken in connection with other things in this *Editorial* the imputation to Dr. Laws of a purpose, "to lengthen out the day of strife and division," verily seems to entitle him to an interest in the 9th Beatitude: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." Matt. v: ii. [See *Letter* pp. 31, 42, 43, 44, 73-5, (Res. 2 & 3,) 81, 83, 84, 85.]

7. The other passage now claims attention. It is narrated *as fact* that "The moment there appears to be a possibility that the Synod of Missouri will enter into negotiations with the Assembly, * he (Dr. Laws) rouses from his quietude, hies to Missouri, arrives too late to make the speech which he has prepared, but publishes it in twenty mortal columns of a newspaper, &c." Well, well, this is awful! For accuracy this is a specimen.

Now, what are the facts? *As a matter of fact*, Dr. Laws was present at the opening of Synod and remained till after its close. In the minutes of the Synod, published weeks since in one of the exchanges of *The Presbyterian*, his name appears amongst those invited to sit as corresponding members. *As a matter of fact*, therefore, he was present, *with the privileges of the floor*, at every action taken by the Synod on ecclesiastical relations, and of his own choice "abode in quietness," not opening his lips. *As a matter of fact*, the Synod entered as fully into negotiations with *our* General Assembly as Dr. Dickson asked, and Dr. Laws' *Letter* gives a full and fair account of all that was done in that respect. *As a matter of fact*, the *Letter* was *not* "prepared" before going to Missouri; nor did he go to that state for any purpose connected with it, but for domestic reasons, and with no expectation then, of attending Synod, as is stated at the very opening of the *Letter*. *Who could have been the "correct" informant relied on in this case?* And yet *The Presbyterian* has been made by this writer to serve its readers *in a leading Editorial*, with this absurd piece of *romancing* in making out a case against a fellow presbyter in whom all *confidence*, and for whom all respect are to be *destroyed*. On whose *head*, as a matter of fact, should the *fool's cap* be placed? and at

whom should the finger of scorn be pointed? Perhaps *The Philadelphia Presbyterian* "*can afford*" to give currency to such stuff as this to serve a purpose: but it may be doubted if its patrons are willing to pay for being so unscrupulously imposed on.

What this *romancing Editorial* says about "the unclean pile" and the "uncovering of a mother's shame in the midst of strangers," is as gross as it is groundless. It is perfectly original, the creation of *his own* imagination. Those who have not read the *Letter* are positively assured that *it* is *not* in any manner responsible for the chasteness or decency of this imagery.

True to his instincts of perfect and untrameled originality, soaring above the common herd and in contempt of common-place facts, the writer of this *Editorial* coruscation of fluorescent genius, says that the Letter of Dr. Laws filled "*twenty mortal columns* of a newspaper." This instance of inaccuracy is quite remarkable, in this, that the writer not only misstates, but absolutely *understates* the fact. The *Letter* filled considerably *more* than "twenty" columns. But it is asked in all courtesy, whether the writer would not have done a more handsome thing, if he had, instead of pronouncing those columns "*mortal*," pronounced them *immortal?* Why so cruel? Is not that a point on which, about the holidays, a little sensitiveness and exuberant and pleasing anticipation of the future, might have been charitably spared from such a cold and frosty *nip?*—"the most unkindest cut of all."

8. In conclusion it is proposed to submit the views of some other parties, entitled to respect and confidence, that the reader may judge of the justness and propriety of a paper like *The Presbyterian*, allowing an article to go forth to the world in its columns such as that *Editorial leader* of Dec. 21, 1872, for the avowed purpose of breaking down a minister of the church for the sole offense of being the author of the *Letter* spoken of in the following extracts. Only brief samples are given.

1. *The North Carolina Presbyterian* in the course of a notice of about a column, says, * * "It (the *Letter*) is an elaborate and careful exhibit of the causes which led to the isolated posture of the Synod of Missouri, and a masterly vindication of the action of the Synod in the controversey forced upon it by the Northern Assembly [O. S.] It contradicts by a process of evidence—an array of facts which is indisputable and on record—the charge of revolutionary and schismatic movement which some have brought against the Synod, and shows that the sentiments of that body, upon which their action was grounded, were clearly consistent with the standards of the Presbyterian Church. The agitation of past issues is never fruitful of profitable results, unless the circumstances clearly justify it. It is better in the main to let old matters of difference alone. But there are occasions when bold, candid, outspoken words are necessary to be uttered for the truth's sake. Such an occasion was

present when the Assembly of the Northern Church approached the Synod of Missouri, and such words Dr. Laws has spoken. * * * *

"The *Letter* is, in some respects, a singular production, but it is an able one; and as it involves matters that reach widely in more directions than one, we join with the *Old School Presbyterian* in the hope "that both our friends and our opponents will give it a careful and impartial reading."

It was from this notice, the reader will observe, that the writer of *The Philadelphia Presbyterian* editorial picked up a fragment of a clause—"*The Letter* is, in some respects, a singular production"—and pressed it into a service, as the hinge on which to swing back and forth, such as must have been utterly repugnant to the mind of its author; and that, too, without any notice to the reader that he was serving a hostile purpose in a wrested fragment of the livery of friendship. Dr. Laws had not seen the N. C. Presb. when he first stumbled on The Philadelphia Presbyterian of Dec. 21, and until he found it, he had an utterly false impression on his mind in regard to it; others may also have been misled

2. *The Memphis Presbyterian*, in the course of a notice of over a column says: "It is beyond our power to review it, (the *Letter*) closely at this time. Dr. Laws has certainly done himself no discredit by this production. It is the product of a master hand, and will command respect wherever read by unprejudiced minds. * * * We commend it to the earnest study of all into whose hands it may fall."

3. *The Earnest Worker*, a Sabbath School and family paper issued by the "Committee of Publication," of the Southern Presbyterian Assembly, and edited by its widely-known Secretary, a man of great ability and experience as an editor, in a notice of about two columns, says: "We have read this pamphlet with a great deal of interest. * * * In it (the 1st part), he ably and conclusively vindicates the course of the Synod, in its dealings with that body [The Assembly O. S.]. The 2d part is a review of the present position of the Synod, and of the course which it should pursue with reference to its future relations. In this part of his letter, Dr. Laws has occasion to speak of our church. * * In this portion of his discussion the Dr. is candid and just. * *

"The letter of Dr. Laws is able, the discussion well sustained, the positions fortified by voluminous reference, and it will well repay a perusal by any one who feels an interest in the subject. Dr. Laws favors a union between our church and the Reformed church in America, and gives interesting historical facts bearing on the subject."

4. Two other states are represented by the two following testimonials from parties recognised as entitled to the very highest consideration. One of them says: "Your very able and lucid letter (in pamphlet form)

to the Synod of Missouri has been received, for which I thank you. I doubt not it will do much good." The other speaks thus: "I have just arisen from the perusal of your *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri, as it appears in the O. S. Presbyterian. I will send a few lines if it only be to say, well done, *thank you.*

"A great danger to the truth all the time, lies just here; mankind are so prone to let fundamentals slip, to allow the record of principle to be covered up with the rags of sickly sentiment. * * * Your trumpet gives no uncertain sound. He who can, (after your paper is studied) fail to see the vital distinction between the doctrines and principles of one Assembly and another, must be hard of seeing or hard of something else. I regret that the Edition of your *Letter* is so small. I would like a statement so plain to be placed in the hand of every minister and every elder throughout the whole country."

5. To these will be added some brief extracts from *The Old School Presbyterian*, St. Louis, Mo., the organ of the Synod to which *The Letter* was addressed. It says: "Dr. Laws ably reviews the controversy, not only vindicating the Synod completely, but also demonstrating that the Assembly, in the days of wild excitement, proceeded unscripturally and contrary to the law of the church, and (which is of vastly more serious moment) has, in these calmer times, persisted in and defended its wrong doing, hedging it securely with ecclesiastical and civil sanctions.

"The spirit of this Letter, its manner of speech, is unexceptionable as its matter is unanswerable. The Doctor exemplifies *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*"

It says again: "He (an exchange) could not have read the Letter of which he speaks so flippantly and incorrectly."* * *

"We just as positively *deny* * * that his (Dr. Laws') object is to refresh the animosities of the past, and render a reconciliation with the General Assembly impossible. On the contrary, Dr. Laws is carefully courteous and *clearly points out the only way by which reconciliation between this Synod and the Northern Assembly can be effected.* This he does by showing how and by whom the variance is perpetuated."

A communication to the *O. S. Presbyterian* says: * * "It is so clear, so candid and so respectful and so luminous a summing up of the whole matter, &c."

6. *The St. Louis Christian Advocate*, a leading paper of another denomination, whose editor is one of the ablest and best known men of his powerful church, speaks as follows:—

"The spirit and manner of the *Letter* are those of a high toned Christian gentleman, such as Dr. Laws is known to be.

"All interested in the controversy, and especially all Presbyterians, will do well to give this *Letter* a careful reading."

7. I feel constrained to add the following testimonial from the pen of a venerable layman, fully 60 years of age, who has been a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church as long as I have been a member of it, and who has often taken a prominent part in all the courts of the church from the Session to the General Assembly,—a man who has been all his life a lawyer by profession and who has with honor worn the judicial ermine, and whose exalted personal worth and professional ability and integrity entitle his opinion to a consideration amongst Presbyterians second to that of no man in America. I here give only extracts but shall, in another connection, have use for this testimonial in full over the name of the distinguished author. He (Judge Wm. T. Wood, now of Lexington, Missouri,) says:

"I have again read your letter addressed to the Synod of Missouri, and with much care, and am more than ever heretofore impressed with its value, not only because of the truth and accuracy of its statements of the matters involved in the issues between the General Assembly (O. S.) and our Synod, but because also of the fact that the real, true and great principles involved, have been distinctly and plainly developed and stated, and discussed with so much of fairness, and at the same time with a clearness and ability that will leave no honest, candid, and intelligent Presbyterian an excuse for ignorance as to the true causes of the attitude and state of our Synod. * * *

"Your letter with a logic unanswerable has asserted and vindicated these principles, so that not a word is needed from any quarter for their support. The resolutions you recommended, at the close of your letter in the scheme you present, from 1 to 6 inclusive (pp. 74–75) embrace substantially all the grounds and questions of difference between our Synod and the General Assembly.

"It gives me great pleasure, to say that I most cordially and fully approve your views and positions, as to the true law of the civil cases, you refer to as having been decided in Missouri and Kentucky and Pennsylvania, and by the Supreme Court of the United States. The law, as decided by the Supreme Court of the U. S., is not sound law, and as laid down by Justice Miller, will not I think be again affirmed by that or any other able Court. That decision resulted from a want of proper knowledge, in the Court, of Church, organization and Government. These cases however you have handled so well, so justly and ably, that I am more than content with what you have said, and will fearlessly invite the criticism of lawyers, feeling sure that your views and positions as to these cases, will have the approval and concurrence of the learned of the profession. * * *

"I will now only add, the expression of a wish that your *Letter* may be printed and published in some more durable form."

8. Finally, *The Philadelphia Presbyterian* says: "His pamphlet is simply

a frantic effort," &c. "All such words are an impertinence which all good men can afford to pass unanswered." &c., &c.

This flippant and futile attempt to laugh such a *Letter* to scorn absolutely beggars comment.

——Ye gods, it doth amaze me,
A man of such feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world
And bear the palm alone.
* * * * * * *
Now in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed
That he is grown so great?

It is useless to make any apology for the length of this communication, as the writer would most willingly have been spared the occasion and trouble of it altogether. He reflected beforehand with the utmost seriousness on the duty imposed upon him to avoid in his manner of presenting it all possible grounds of offense. Hence, he has only held up the mirror to the *Editorial* itself and there has been an endeavor to make no forced constructions and to be just and candid in whatever was said, and temperate and free from petulance and as unobtrusive of self as a personal defence rendered possible, with no desire to triumph or to unduly press any advantage, beyond what the proprieties of the occasion rendered becoming and imperative. It is certainly a more humane and a more Godlike act to reach down and in unmistakeable kindness offer to lift up one supposed to be erring, than, with a will, to take advantage of the terrible enginery of a misguided press to trample such an one in the mire. No just and true man could find any satisfaction in fighting against the truth and all the more noble instincts of his nature by persisting in such a course. Every ingenuous mind feels a relief in being delivered from error even if it be "so as by fire." Such a saving may be considered a "contrariwise blessing."

Mr. Editor, if hereafter you wish any additional information first hand and on which you can rely, in regard to "Dr. Laws," it will be most cheerfully and fully given; and you are invited to his residence, where you will find a prophet's chamber and hospitable entertainment, so long as you may wish to pursue your original investigations. He harbors not the slightest ill will; and if the church and the public will forgive, he does so most freely. He can also forgive others. It was a serious error, it is true, but it is human to err. We all make mistakes and so does the church itself, sometimes, you know. But one may, on recovering from an error, like Peter, be stronger than before. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethern." There may be a blessing for both in this occurrence—it certainly takes the "woe" off of your humble servant.

Allow me to wish you *a Happy New Year*,

New York, 145 East 27th St.,
December 31st, 1872.

Fraternally,
SAMUEL S. LAWS.

[*From the Philadelphia Presbyterian, Jan.* 25, 1873.]

Dr. LAWS' CORRECTION.

"*Messrs. Editors,*—In an editorial of the *Presbyterian*, December 21, 1872, is found the following language, to-wit:—'Dr. Laws, if the reports which have reached us are correct, has laid aside entirely his ministerial functions. His daily business leads him to Wall street.' And again, 'Dr. Laws is, in the complete sense of the term, a secularized minister' . . 'seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits.' In the *Presbyterian* of the 18th inst. Dr. Laws is represented as 'deeply immersed in secular pursuits in the city of New York, and it is observed, 'We are very clear in the conviction that the fact (of his being thus occupied) should have imposed silence upon him in the controversies of the Church.'

"To the public as well as to myself this assurance is given, 'If we have been misinformed, and have done him injustice in saying this, we will be most happy to correct it.'

Messrs. Editors, you 'have been misinformed, and have done him injustice in saying this.' 'The reports which have reached you are *not* correct.' They are wholly at fault. 'Dr. Laws does *not* seek a livelihood by secular pursuits of any kind; his daily business most certainly does *not* lead him to Wall street. 'The fact' is he is *not* immersed in secular pursuits in the city of New York at all, nor elsewhere; and still farther, he has *not* laid aside his ministerial functions, and has no idea of doing so, although from no fault or preference of his own, he has been for some time so situated '*by providential circumstances*' as to have had very limited occasion or opportunity for their exercise. He had good and controlling reasons for coming to New York when he did, and has not yet had any sufficient providential indications for leaving it.

"In this week's issue of the *Presbyterian*, (the 18th inst.) it is said, 'Our controversy with Dr. Laws is not a personal one. We have no reason to doubt that he has discharged the offices conferred on him, either by State or Church, well.'

"'Dr. Laws assures you that he never, in all his life, held an office of any kind from the State, nor took any part in politics; he feels called on in this connection to correct mistakes in regard to himself personally, but not to defend his letter." [*However, he would be pleased to submit the following testimonials of other parties in regard to this* Letter *or Pamphlet, which the New York Presbytery has regarded of so much importance as to appoint a Committee of five to report upon it.** * * * *]

We cheerfully publish the statement from Dr. Laws which is given above, though it conflicts with information given us. Our statements that Dr. Laws was engaged in secular business in the city of New York, and that his daily business "led him to Wall street," were founded on the following facts communicated to us, which we believe are entirely trustworthy: A printed list of the members of the Gold Exchange of New York (published June, 1866,) shows that Samuel S. Laws was then a member of the Gold Board, having his office at No. 22 Pine street.

A list of the members of the Open Board of Stock Brokers of New

* This entire sentence in the brackets, and the testimonials following it, (which were the same, excepting that from *The Presbyterian* itself, as those in my suppressed *Reply* (pp. 23–26) were omitted by the "Editor" on his own responsibility. The quotation marks in which it will be observed that my "Correction" is set, is no proper nor sufficient notice of the Editorial *liberty* thus taken with my communication. There are some other changes of no importance, such as "Mr. Editor," to "Messrs. Editors," and a disregard of some underscoring and quotation marks.

York (published in the same volume,) shows that he was also then a member of this Board, having his office at 27 Wall street, New York.

A list of the bankers and brokers in New York, published in the *Merchant's and Banker's Almanac*, January, 1871, shows that he was then a member of both the Gold Exchange and the Stock Exchange.

An inquiry, made on the 9th inst., at the rooms of the Gold Board New York reveals the fact that he sold his seat in that board on or about the 18th of December, 1872.

It will be noticed that Dr. Laws' "Correction" is written in the present tense. It implies, we presume, that Dr. Laws has withdrawn from the secular pursuits in which he was at one time engaged. But while we are very willing to accept Dr. Laws' testimony as to this fact, it does not alter the state of facts as they were when he wrote his "Letter to the Synod of Missouri," (Old-school.) Our criticisms of the latter were grounded on the fact that at the time he prepared and published that "Letter" his steps did lead him to Wall street, where he was a fortunate possessor of a seat at the Gold Board. He did not leave the Gold Room, if our information is correct, until after he had returned from his visit to the Synod of Missouri. We submit that no plea founded upon what he is *now* can avail to shield him from criticisms founded on what he was *then*. With this remark we dismiss the subject, so far as we are concerned, from our columns.

[*From the Philadelphia Presbyterian, Feb.* 8, 1873.]

DR. LAWS' STATEMENT.*

Messrs. Editors—In the *Presbyterian* of this week, January 25th, 1873, the following editorial statements are made, to wit:

"It will be noticed that Dr. Laws' correction is written in the present tense. . . . Our criticisms of the letter were grounded on the fact that at the time he prepared and published that 'Letter,' his steps did lead him to Wall street. . . . We submit that no plea founded upon what he is *now* can avail to shield him from criticisms founded on what he was *then*."

Will you allow "Dr. Laws" to state that, so far as business and secular pursuits are concerned, his position when he wrote that communication in the "present tense" was the same as when he wrote the letter to the Synod of Missouri, and also the same as it has been for several years. The supposed "fact" as to his daily occupation, on which the "criticisms were grounded," therefore, was an entire mistake. The use of the "present tense," to which attention is called, was, consequently, in no manner evasive, but wholly because the criticisms themselves were in that tense.

There are other and fresh errors of "information" in this issue which it is not deemed worth while to notice here. Dr. Laws still holds his ticket of membership in the New York Gold Exchange; at least, the party entrusted with his business has not yet reported to him the sale of

* This "Statement," it will be observed, was not published till after the meeting of The New York Presbytery given below.

it. [All Dr. Laws asks of *The Presbyterian* is that, if it has occasion to publish any statements about him personally, they be *truthful*.*]

If proper "inquiry" had been made, it would have been ascertained that Dr. Laws never was an active member of either of the Exchanges, and that his relations to both of them were formerly matters of importance by virtue of what, as he conceives, reflects on him great honor. Although he has been so quiet about it, nevertheless he is the inventor—the originator and introducer into the business circles of this city of that system of telegraphing now in operation in Europe as well as throughout the United States, which reports the fluctuations of the exchanges of the world in hundreds of business offices simultaneously. Since telegraphing took a practical shape in the hands of Morse, no application of electricity, except that of the Atlantic cable, has produced so great a sensation and revolution in the business circles of the world's great centres of trade, as this one originated by Dr. Laws. When he had, as an individual matter, carried it to the point of accepted success, he joined his interests with others, and withdrew all personal attention from it nearly four years since, to resume labors more congenial.

This wonderful scientific and mechanical contribution to the improvements of this age is historical; and it is of itself more than most men accomplish in life. The priority of Dr. Laws rests on voluminous evidence under oath. This is the special business that occupied him for several years in and about the exchanges of New York City, and a lack of acquaintance with this state of facts, explains the blundering and groping of the informants of the *Presbyterian*.

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* I was careful to retain an exact copy of the manuscript of the "Correction" as well as of the "Statement" sent to *The Presbyterian*. The *entire qualifying sentence* contained in these brackets was omitted by *The Presbyterian*. It is certain that no such omission would ever be made by a compositor or a proof reader unless the sentence had been erased, or authority for doing so had been given at head-quarters. There is a number of other unwarrantable changes, such as that of the address to "Messrs. Editors" from "Mr. Editor," the omission of quotation marks and a disregard of underscoring for *italics* to which no special importance attaches. But when a liberty is taken with the *text* of one's manuscript the case is very different; it is not then a matter of the printer's art. Of the three communications that were sent to *The Presbyterian* in the course of this controversy, the 1st, the "*Reply*," was wholly *suppressed* and the editor indulged in a column of comment on the suppressed article! The 2d, the "Correction," p. 128, was *suppressed in part*, less than half of it, or such part as the "Editor" chose to select, being published without any notice being given to the reader, but, on the contrary, a style of remark was assumed that implies great fairness. The 3d, this "Statement," was also changed by *striking out* this entire and most important sentence. Now, in reference to all this, I have two remarks to make: 1. Such editorial conduct is incompatible with fair-minded and honorable dealing; and 2d. A newspaper, whether religious or secular, edited in this style, is not entitled to any man's confidence. Who that reads *The Pres-*

byterian can say, in the face of such facts, that he has any assurance that the articles published therein are what the authors wrote, whose names attach to them? The man who is so destitute of a true sense of literary honor and honesty as to materially change a writer's manuscript without proper authority from him to do so, is as untrustworthy as a book-keeper who makes false entries in accounts. The man who alters my manuscript in defense of my character is as basely unscrupulous as he who forges or alters a note on my poeket. What I here say does not rest upon an "if my information be correct," but upon stubborn *facts* which this "editor" has put on record against himself. His case is not at all relieved by the following specimen of editorial consistency, which shows that this editor, at heart, is as really opposed to those *bellum* deliverances of the Assembly as my pamphlet, which he so savagely abuses and unconscionably misrepresents. This extract is taken from an *editorial* of *The Presbyterian* of July 13, 1872. If it was right in him (Dr. Grier,) to oppose these things where is the sin of my doing so?

He says:

"We agree that civil and ecclesiastical courts are all fallible, and have pronounced erroneous decisions. We are not, in any respect, followers of the Vatican Council, and do not believe in the infallibility either of priest or judge.

"We agree that by the principles of our national polity, Church and State, in our land, are separate and independent institutions. The courts of the Church have no jurisdiction in civil matters, and the courts of the State have no jurisdiction in things spiritual.

"We are willing further to agree with Dr. Junkin in saying that much of the action of the various General Assemblies out of which the lawsuits in Kentucky ultimately grew, was unwise, and in its results, very disastrous. The deliverances of the Assembly at Pittsburg in 1865 in reference to the Southern Presbyterian churches we have always regarded as most unfortunate and erroneous. We opposed this action privately with all our ability at the time it was taken, and afterwards in the *Presbyterian* argued against it with so much earnestness that it cost us quite a number of subscribers, especially in the region in which Dr. Junkin lives. The action of the Assembly of 1866, by which Dr. Stuart Robinson and Dr. S. R. Wilson were excluded from the Assembly of which they were members, before the appeal of Dr. Breckinridge was reached and decided, we have always believed to be contrary to the law of the Presbyterian church, and uncalled for in the circumstrnces of the case."

I now dismiss this newspaper controversy with the remark that whilst it was a personal assault that drew me into this defence, yet I have not pursued nor drawn to view this "editor" who made the attack, beyond the revelation he has made of himself in the columns of his own paper. I should not have engaged in this controversy, however, nor have published it, had I not been impelled by the conviction that interests of higher consequence were at stake than any of a merely personal character. In the vindication of truth the motto of the Order of the Thistle and of Scotland's banner may ever be unfurled—

Nemo me impune lacessit.

VII.

The New York Presbytery.

On January 6th, and February 3d, 1873, this Presbytery took the following actions relative to the Letter to the Synod of Mo.

"New York, Jan. 6, 1873.

"Messrs. Hatfield, Burchard, Conkling, Murray and Thomson were appointed a committee to inquire in regard to a certain pamphlet from the pen of Rev. S. S. Laws, a member of this Presbytery, reported as reflecting on the Presbyterian Church, to report and recommend what, if any action be required in the matter.

"A true extract from the Minutes,

"S. D. ALEXANDER,

(Signed,) Stated Clerk."

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, Jan.* 31, 1873.]

ANOTHER IPSO FACTO.

We have seen Dr. Laws' reply to the editorial abuse of him in the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. It is long, but it does not render evil for evil, railing for railing. Its defense of its author is couched in earnest and strong language, but, at the same time, it is remarkably courteous towards his assailant. Indeed, it is "given to hospitality"—for it concludes, not only with a disavowal of ill-will, but with an invitation to the editor to occupy the "prophet's chamber," and share the "hospitable entertainment" of Dr. Laws' home. It is unpardonable that the editor, after having made the unprovoked, wanton personal attack, should refuse to print the reply—particularly, as he was at liberty to insert a part of it, if he should find the whole too long.

But, we set out to inform our readers that Dr. Laws' *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri is about to be looked into officially. A committee has been appointed by the *Presbytery of New York*, of which Dr. Laws is a member, "to inquire in regard to a certain pamphlet" from his pen, "reported as reflecting on the Presbyterian church, to report and recommend what, if any, action be required in the matter."

We are both sorry and glad to know this—sorry, that the spirit of Gurley, Monford, Thomas, McLean and Stanton—the spirit of the "brutal" Assembly of 1866—is rampant still—sorry, that any *Presbyterian* body includes even one man so un-protestant, so tinctured with ecclesiastical tyranny as to set on foot this inquisition. And yet we are glad: for, it may be that, thus, providentially, the subject matter of the *Letter* will secure the consideration it deserves, and the result of such consideration may be the bringing about a better state of things in the Presbyterian family.

Can it be that there is enough miserable fanaticism in the *Presbytery of New York* to enact another *ipso facto*—to turn Dr. Laws out and put his *Letter* on the *Index Expurgatorius?* If so, he and the *Letter* will be in good company—but the breach in the Presbyterian household will be widened.

[The action of the Presbytery upon the Report of the above Committee.]

NEW YORK, FEB. 3, 1873.

The Presbytery of New York met in its usual place of meeting, viz., the lecture room of Dr. Booth's church, corner of 10th St. and University Place. The *report* of the foregoing "Committee to inquire in regard to a certain Pamphlet from the pen of Rev. S. S. Laws, a member of this Presbytery," was the first order of the day.

The report was made by Dr. Hatfield as chairman, and signed by three names of the Committee of five. It was *accepted.* Its *adoption* was moved by Dr. Booth and seconded by Rev. Mr. Murphy. A copy of this report cannot be given here, for reasons that will appear in the sequel; but the character of it can be gathered from the course of the discussion. When the motion for adoption was fully before the Presbytery—

Dr. Alexander arose and remarked that perhaps he stood alone in this matter, but he could not approve of this report, which was simply a piece of personal invective. He presumed that very few of the Presbytery had read the letter, so that they were acting in the dark. If there were any charges tabled let Dr. Laws be tried on them. He regretted the discussion of these old issues, but did not think that the Presbytery had anything to do with the Pamphlet.

Rev. W. W. Page felt an interest in the Southern Church and in the Northern Church: he also felt an interest in the Church of Christ, and hoped that the Presbytery would not pursue a course in this matter that would do harm.

Dr. Adams could not approve of the language in which the report was expressed. He agreed substantially with Dr. Alexander; saw no good that could come from a discussion of the subject, or action thereon by the Presbytery, and moved to lay the report on the table.

Dr. Hastings seconded the motion of Dr. Adams to lay the report on the table.

Dr. Hatfield urged that the Committee had a right to be heard in defence of the report, which they had submitted, and objected to its being so summarily disposed of. The motion to lay on the table was then withdrawn.

Dr. Hastings had read the documents in question and the only thing that he would particularly criticise was that, as it seemed to him, Dr. Laws had rather misused his position as a member of this Presbytery to give his Letter influence.

Dr. Booth (who had moved the appointment of the Committee of January 6th 1873, who had also moved the adoption of the report of that Committee) had not read the pamphlet but had heard complaint of

it and the desire expressed that it should be looked into by the Presbytery. He had moved in the thing only because others who thought something ought to be done hesitated to do it: but he had refused to serve on the Committee. All he knew of the matter arose from a subsequent reading of *The Presbyterian* and the present report of the Committee. But the thing of importance before the Presbytery is this, shall there come a defiance of the Assembly and a resistance of its friendly overture to the Synod of Missouri from a member of this body? Such a thing he considered a grievance and a wrong. The honor of the Presbytery was at stake and that honor was to be prized above all other things.

Dr. Hatfield was chairman of the Committee, but not a member of the Committee had sought this investigation. They had been appointed by a unanimous vote of Presbytery and had only undertaken to do their duty.

Since their appointment he had re-read the Letter and other members of the Committee had read it. They had put themselves in communication with brethren in various parts of the country—gentlemen whose names have great weight; and had taken their advice in regard to what was best to be done. It was after all this care in seeking and receiving counsel, that it was concluded not to institute process of trial, but that it was due to the Presbytery and to the Church to make protest against the language of this particular document, as is done in the report.

The facts are these, &c. The Assembly at Detroit last spring, made a friendly overture to the Synod of Missouri, in which he (Dr. H.) felt a special interest as he had been an early member of that Synod.

The whole document is nothing more than an indictment of the General Assembly to which the writer belongs, reviving and detailing the actions of the separate bodies and charging them on the United Assembly. It is a labored effort to prevent that Old School Synod from entertaining any propositions of union with our General Assembly. He brings the charge of secularisation against the church, whilst he himself has been engaged in secular pursuits in this city for years. He had sought to array these facts of past years in such a way as to defeat the admirable designs of our Assembly. The Committee, on reading the Letter, had felt exceedingly indignant, and advised as they had been, by leading men in the church, and especially by one whose name, were it mentioned, would have special influence with the Presbytery, under the circumstances, the Committee felt that they could do no less than what they have done.

Dr. Laws asked Dr. Hatfield to favor him with the name of the advisor to whom such special reference is made.

Dr. Hatfield declined to give it, on the ground that the correspondence was private.

Dr. Laws. But this is no secret conclave or star-chamber.

Dr. Hatfield. True, and I should be most happy to give the name, if at liberty to do so.

[The moderator here announced that the hour had arrived for the next orders of the day, viz.: The hearing of Dr. Jacobus, on Ministerial Sustentation and of Dr. Speer, on Education.]

On resuming the consideration of the Letter to the Synod of Missouri, Dr. Hatfield proposed that if the report were recommitted to the Committee, a certain clause in it would be stricken out.

Dr. Conkling stated that, although on the Committee, he had not seen the report till since he came in after the reading and discussion of it, and that he could not subscribe to it.

Dr. Hall moved the recommittal of the report to the Committee, expressing confidence that they were disposed to do what was right and proper in the case.

Dr. Laws asked that he might be allowed to take a copy of the paper before it passed out of the hands of the Presbytery.

Chancellor Crosby objected, and insisted that, as the paper had not been adopted by the Presbytery, he had no right to it, and could look to the Committee for it.

Dr. Laws explained that he did not wish to impede the movement of Dr. Hall's resolution for recommittal; and that he did not demand it as a right, but only asked permission to copy the paper, (the report of the Committee) as a part of the history of the case. This request was not entertained.

Dr. Paxton stated that it seemed to him that the proper thing for the Presbytery to do, was to call on Dr. Laws for an explanation, and then to take action in view of it. The state of the case is this: The General Assembly makes a friendly overture, &c.,—and a member of this Presbytery has written a document which sets at defiance the action of the Assembly and undertakes to defeat this friendly overture to the Synod of Missouri.

Dr. Laws. May I be allowed to ask Dr. Paxton, if he has read the Pamphlet?

Dr. Paxton. No, I have not.

Dr. Laws. That will explain his having such views, for I felt sure he never could have formed them from reading the Pamphlet itself.

Dr. Paxton. Is that not its purport?

Dr. Laws. I prefer not to reply to any specific inquiry as I expect to make a general answer.

Dr. Hatfield replied that its purpose was as stated.

Dr. Laws. I deny it.

Dr. Paxton then proceeded to unfold what he supposed to be the import of the Pamphlet and the posture of parties, and urged the idea that Presbytery should call on its author for explanation and then take action in view of that explanation.

The Moderator rose to put the motion of Dr. Hall for the recommittal of the report to the Committee, when Dr. Laws addressed the Moderator and was recognized; and on taking the floor, he remarked that what he had to say should properly be said before that report passed from the hands of the Presbytery, as it had been discussed in its present form at his expense; and therefore, he would make at this point, what remarks he had to make on this occasion.

1. The first point made was that all who had taken up their impressions from *The Philadelphia Presbyterian* either in regard to myself or my Letter to the Synod of Missouri had been misled. That paper, in its issue of Dec. 21, 1872, had devoted an entire column to me personally without the slightest provocation except my having written this Pamphlet. I promptly wrote an answer to that editorial attack, but my answer was wholly refused publication and another column was devoted to me in the same strain and the misrepresentations were repeated in the face of my correction, and others were added. I then sent a brief "Correction;" a garbled portion of which was inserted without any permission being asked or accorded to print a part and not the whole of the communication. This was accompanied by a quarter of a column more of characteristic comment. I then sent a "Statement" which should have appeared before this if at all, but it has thus far been withheld, so that whilst this paper has devoted between two and three columns in the course of several issues to what I have not hesitated to term misrepresentations of myself and my Letter, I have been denied a hearing, only about fifteen lines of my own composition having been allowed insertion.*

The remark was interposed that the *Presbyterian* had not been specially responsible, as another paper at Pittsburg had been spoken of as expressing similar views.

I responded that I was aware of what had been said by the *Pittsburg Banner* and also by *The Interior*, of Chicago, but that *The Presbyterian* had been named on this occasion and also referred to on the occasion of appointing the committee whose report is under consideration, in such a way as to show that *it* was the special oracle that had inspired this movement by the editorial attacks to which reference has been made.

2. With reference to the report of the committee, I shall begin with it where it ends, as it concludes by stigmatizing in no measured terms, what I have done as an act of censurable "*impropriety*" and of signal "*disloyalty*" to the Presbyterian Church.

As to the propriety of my writing this Letter and addressing it to the Synod of Missouri, (O. S.,) let some circumstances be considered that may not be generally known by the members of this Presbytery. I was

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* The "Statement" was published in the issue after this meeting of Presbytery, i. e., Feb. 8th, with the change noted above. (p. 180.)

formerly a member of that Synod; for about eight years I held official relations to it whilst connected with the Synodical College of that state, one year as Professor and some seven years as President of it. My successor in that position is Dr. N. L. Price, formerly a member of this body and now the President of Westminster College, Missouri. Some of the ministers and elders in that Synod and myself were boys together, with some of them I was a fellow student and quite a number of them have been my own pupils. There are more than a score of ministers in the church that I have been somewhat instrumental in preparing for their work (and this is amongst the pleasing reminiscences of my life,) and a number of them are active members of the Synod of Missouri. Yes, Mr. Moderator, I am "well known" in "that quarter," too well known to need any special endorsement or introduction from this quarter; just as well known, I may with propriety say, as any gentleman in this body is known in the city of New York.

When I was visiting there last fall, gentlemen of my acquaintance learning my views in private conversation and believing that they would be of great service to the Synod which has been so beset with trouble for the past six or seven years, I yielded to a friendly urgency in writing this Letter; and it was at the instance of others that I gave it my name, as I was assured that many in the Synod would be pleased to have something known to be from my pen on the subject of which it treats. But the fact is, if it were only for my own sake, I do not regret, but am very glad that I yielded to the claim made upon me and wrote this much-praised and much-abused Letter, as it has collected together in a permanent and accessible form a mass of interesting documents and facts which make it valuable, as I am disposed to think, even to those who may not agree with the views expressed in it. Although I have not obtruded them upon others, nevertheless the views therein expressed have been floating in my head during these unhappy controversies of the church, and I am well satisfied at having given outward expression and shape to them.

Now, under all ordinary circumstances, when a man addresses his old associates and friends, and in doing so, does what he has a perfect right to do, some deference should be accorded to his own opinion with respect to the propriety of his conduct; he is entitled to some consideration, in such a case, as he must be expected to understand some of its aspects better than do others. I still think that what I did was eminently fit and proper, and it is a misconception to suppose, as has been suggested, that I availed myself of my connection with this Presbytery to give my views any weight that would not otherwise attach to them. On the contrary, my connection with this Presbytery is only incidentally alluded to once or twice, and that, too, in a manner indicative of the fact that my views are not the prevailing views of this body, and to show

that there was no just ground for prejudice against what I should say growing out of my connection with this Presbytery.

3. As to the imputation of "*disloyalty*" which is placed as a sting in the end of this report, and has been similarly applied by a certain newspaper,—I will say that if that word means anything, it must mean our obedience to the laws of any body of which we are members, and to whose rightful enactments we are under obligations to submit. All my life I have been a law-abiding man, both in the church and the state, and I defy anybody to establish against me the charge thus odiously made. But, Mr. Moderator, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that *my* loyalty, in both church and state is *contingent* and not absolute,—contingent upon their acting within their legitimate spheres of authority; contingent upon their adherence to the truth and the right. My loyalty to that which is *true* and *right* is above the claims of the enactments of any organizations; and my loyalty to Christ is the criterion of my submission to the acts of any of his erring councils on earth. I verily believe that our General Assembly has, in the particulars criticised in my Pamphlet, greatly erred, and that it is its imperative duty to acknowledge and forsake these errors which are grievous stumbling blocks in the way of others, as well as mill-stones about its own neck.

4. This leads me to reply to the charge of secularity. It is urged that it ill became me to accuse the church of erring in regard to secular matters when I, myself, had been engaged, for years, in secular pursuits in this city. I must confess that I do not appreciate the force (if it has any) of this *ad hominem* retort, so strenuously urged here and elsewhere. Suppose it true, as it is not, that I had forsaken the ministry and gone astray, willfully and of my own preference, in the paths of secular occupation. Could that be pleaded as justly altering the force of any *truthful* plea that might be found in my Pamphlet against improper secular deliverances on the part of the Assembly? My being wrong in any given course of action would not justify others therein, nor destroy my right to warn nor the propriety and *duty* of my warning them against being led astray into that path which I thus knew to be strewn with thorns and pitfalls. But, Sir, I never surrendered nor forfeited my right as a member and a minister of the Presbyterian church, which entitles me to be heard with the same respect as others, even my accusers, to the extent that, in the good providence of God, I may be able to give timely utterance to important truths.

In view of what has been said of my connection with business matters in this city, it is proper that, under the circumstances, I should explain somewhat in this presence and on this occasion. I shall do so in a few words. The occasion of my coming to New York city, as a place of sojourn, was briefly this. At my home, Fulton, Missouri, in March, 1862, I was required by the military to take an oath, which I could not take

for *two* sufficient reasons: 1. It required me to swear to a *particular theory* of the government, which was in utter violation of my convictions of the truth of history. I had, for years, lectured to my classes on the Constitution of the United States, having gathered into my library, one of the best collections of authorities on this subject to be found in any private library in the country, and made a special study of the text books and history of that instrument. It had just as well been demanded of me to forswear the facts in the history of the life of Christ, as to forswear the sacred facts in the history of my country and of its Constitution. 2. The other impracticable thing demanded of me by the oath, was that I should take an active part in the prosecution of the war. I was a minister of Christ, and a non-combatant by law, and besides, I wholly disapproved of the war, not believing it the right mode for us, as a Christian people, to settle our difficulties. In addition to this a bond was required of me as security that I would keep this oath; and that bond was double what was required of the leading politicians of that district, the two state senators. Under ordinary circumstances it would be deemed an insult and outrage to require a man to give a bond to keep his oath, but such was the manner of those times, these bonds not unfrequently being mere pretexts, under the cover of which to accomplish robbery. Well, Mr. Moderator, I could not do what was thus required of me. I would have died sooner than do it; I did go to prison for months in preference to doing it.

But during those months of imprisonment I had the great pleasure of preaching to hundreds of my fellow prisoners, of reading God's Word to them and of holding prayers with them daily. In fact, except Rev. Father Ryan, of the Catholic Church, I was the only man who broke unto those poor perishing men, the Bread of Life, in any form, during the months of my incarceration.—Some one asking where this was, I replied St. Louis, and in the Gratiot Street Prison, which had been known as McDowell's Medical College. I was refused permission to preach to any prisoners, except those in the part where I was confined, to whom I preached without asking any permission to do so, whilst Father Ryan had the entrée of all parts of the prison. He was a most excellent and agreeable gentleman and I was pleased with his acquaintance.

There never were any charges preferred against me. This is the indisputable fact, as shown by the documents in my possession. After an imprisonment of several months, a parole was tendered to me, which required me to remain in the loyal states, and not to *talk* nor to *write* on the subject of the war. That parole I refused to take, for the simple reason that no man could have honestly kept it, without stultifying himself, as there was nothing else to talk about in ordinary conversation. However, after a few weeks more, the parole was modified in this respect,*

* I believe myself indebted to Prof. G. C. Swallow, A. M., M. D., for this favor.

although it still required me not to write; but it extended my prison bounds beyond the loyal states, to Canada or Europe. I gave that parole and kept it, and was only relieved from it by President Johnson's peace proclamation long after the close of the war.

I first went to Europe, and expected my family to follow me, with the view of remaining there till the close of the war, if not longer; but a death in my family broke up my plans, and I came back in less than a year. I went West, and waited for peace a good part of another year, but the war still continued, and no man was able to foresee its end. I had some kinsmen in business in this city, and was urged to come here. I did so, and the office of one of them, who was a commission merchant, naturally became my head-quarters. As I was unoccupied he would sometimes ask me, as a personal favor, to attend to some matter of business for him,—to execute, it might be, some order in the markets of the Exchanges.

Mr. Moderator, I felt *the dignity of the cloth* quite as much as any man on this floor, and experienced a shrinking from this thing. But thus it was that I was first drawn within the sphere of secular employment in this city. Amongst that of others, I formed the acquaintance of the gentleman who was elected President of the New York Gold Exchange, at its organisation in the fall of 1864. He was the son of a minister, I believe a member of a Congregational church, and a Christian gentleman. It was he who brought my name before that Exchange, for the vice-presidency of it, or "*moderatorship*," as it was called, which may sound like rather an ecclesiastical title for a secular organisation of that kind. Having resigned the Presidency of Westminister College, Fulton, Missouri, the fall after the war broke out (1861), I had now been unoccupied, and on expense for several years, and available funds began to run low. The position so unexpectedly offered to me was not attractive, but it was unanimously tendered to me by a body of honorable and responsible gentlemen in the pursuit of a lawful, a necessary and honorable department of the banking business; and although I was not a member of the body, they gave me a complimentary ticket of membership, and fixed the compensation for the service asked, at a liberal figure.

I accepted this place, but occupied it less than a year: I resigned it in a little over eleven months, and had the pleasure of receiving from the body a handsome testimonial to the fidelity and success with which I had discharged the responsible duties of my position. That resignation of my position as presiding officer of this exchange occured seven years ago last fall.

But having now become familiar with the dealings in the business circles of the exchanges and seeing the great inconveniences arising from a lack of prompt and reliable information in private offices, respecting the fluctuations of the public markets, I formed the opinion that electri-

city could be made available to meet this great want, and to relieve business men of this annoying and expensive inconvenience.

In a word, I AM THE INVENTOR, the *originator and introducer* at my own risk, of THE SYSTEM OF SIMULTANEOUS REPORTING BY TELEGRAPH IN BUSINESS OFFICES, now so well known in this city and elsewhere. This application of electricity is *historical* and the most remarkable since Morse made it available for general, social and commercial uses, and it has produced the greatest change and sensation in business circles, since that, excepting only the Atlantic Cable. This undertaking occupied me for several years; but when I had carried it to the point, where it became an accepted success and a matter of business routine, I withdrew from it and left it to others. The Western Union Telegraph Co., is now the controlling party in interest. Had I fancied secular pursuits, I had my hands full of business of the most profitable kind. In order to resume labors more congenial to my tastes and habits as a minister, I turned my back on a successful business and sacrificed more in doing so, than would buy out these newspapers that have been so industriously misrepresenting me, and heaping their foolish reproaches on my head. It was my connection with this system of *telegraphic reporting* that made my membership in the exchanges a matter of importance to me, as I never was properly a dealer or speculator as those terms are understood. My withdrawal from any active participation in business, was well nigh four years since.—This is the manner and this the extent to which I have been occupied in business circles in this city. I seek no better vindication than a bare statement of the facts in the case.

5. I turn now to the charge that is urged at the beginning of the report of this Committee that I have "*sought*" throughout my *Letter* to "*thwart* the friendly overtures of the General Assembly to the Synod of Missouri,"—*sought to thwart*, these are the terms used. This is in the line of a certain newspaper representation, but it cannot be substantiated. The very contrary is the truth. The Letter in question so far from opposing or *seeking to* "*thwart*" this overture of the Assembly, undertakes to show plainly the true and only way in which the union therein contemplated can be accomplished. Numerous citations might be made from the *Letter* itself in proof of this assertion, but your attention will only be asked to some evidence that this is precisely the understanding that those have of it, to whom it was addressed. The Old School Presbyterian of St. Louis, which may be regarded the organ of the Synod of Missouri to which this Letter was addressed, whose able editor, the Rev. Dr. Ferris, was a classmate of mine in Princeton Seminary, and who is one of the committee of three, if not its chairman, appointed by the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) at the request of Dr. Dickson to "confer with the Committee appointed by the Assembly," with which this Presbytery is connected, in regard to this same overture of union, uses the following

language bearing on the point now under consideration. This paper, in its issue of Nov. 22, 1872, says, in reply to a representation in *The Interior*, of Chicago, similar to that in this report:

"We just as positively DENY, as (*The Interior*) asserts, that Dr. Laws 'fights the old D. and T. battle over again.' and that his 'object is to refresh the animosities of the past and render a reconciliation with the General Assembly impossible.' On the contrary, Dr. Laws is carefully courteous, and *clearly points out* THE ONLY WAY BY WHICH RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THIS SYNOD AND THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY CAN BE EFFECTED. This he does by showing how and by whom the variance is perpetuated." (The italics and caps. are mine.)

The same paper contained the following editorial in the issue to which my Letter was published as a supplement. It bears directly on the point as to the understanding had of the Letter, and all who have that Letter have had the opportunity of seeing it for themselves as it is printed on the cover:

"OUR SUPPLEMENT.—Rev. Dr. Dickson, of the Committee from the Northern Assembly, asked our Synod to appoint a committee to state the causes which have led to our present position, and the obstacles to our union with the Assembly he represented.

"We do not know that we can better and more briefly describe our Supplement than by saying that it is, though not of purpose, a compliance with Dr. Dickson's request. It was designed, as its distinguished author asserts, to be laid before the Synod, at its recent meeting, had opportunity offered; and, therefore, it could not have been prepared specifically to give the information asked for by Dr. Dickson. Nevertheless, it is a statement of the causes which have led to our present position, and of the obstacles to our union with the Northern Assembly.

"And it is a clear, perfectly intelligible, masterly statement. Dr. Laws answers these two questions: '*How is it that the Synod of Missouri became isolated?*' and, '*Why cannot the Synod of Missouri connect itself with the General Assembly North?*' He answers them most courteously and most conclusively. We thank him, not only because he has calmly and plainly set forth our grievances, but also, and chiefly, because he has demonstrated, beyond cavil, that there is a vital, an irreconcilable difference between this Synod and the Northern Assembly as to *Presbyterianism and the nature and province of the Church.*. We trust, therefore, that both our friends and our opponents will give Dr. Laws' 'Letter' a careful and impartial reading."

The same paper, Dec. 22d, 1872, thus notices a similar misrepresentation of my Letter on the part of *The Presbyterian*, of Philadelphia:

"But the Philadelphia *Presbyterian* is not restrained, rather is exasperated by the Doctor's mildness and courtesy, and takes no notice whatever of the argument. Calling on his imagination for the facts as to how the *Letter* originated, he describes it, of course, falsely, as 'simply a frantic effort to prevent the Synod of Missouri from joining the Northern church.' We say, that, of course, this is false. There was no reason why any such man should attempt to prevent any such thing. There was no tendency in the Synod toward the Northern church. One man, indeed, ventured to breath a syllable for union in that direction, but he

was charitably looked upon as somewhat beside himself. And we think that, since then, he himself has come to a wiser mind."

Mr. Moderator, the brethern in that Synod, with whom our Assembly has to deal, understand themselves and the principles involved in their position perfectly. It is not possible to throw dust in their eyes, or to blind them to the issues that lie before them; and there is not the slightest prospect of accomplishing an ecclesiastical union with them, except upon agreement of principle. Expediency will not answer. It was the endeavor of my *Letter* to point out the principles that divide us, and thus lead to such an understanding of our differences as would in the end be serviceable, in the most effectual manner, in bringing about such a state of things that a union, as the overture of the Assembly expresses it, "on conditions mutually acceptable," should be practicable. If my *Letter* has not succeeded in bringing these principles to view, then it is a failure. But my friends, to say nothing of strangers, have assured me that in that respect it has successfully attained its purpose, and whatever discount might be made from their opinion on the score of partiality, they are deemed sufficiently critical and exacting by those from whom they differ—

Dr. Hastings, at this point, asked if it would be any interruption for him to ask a couple of questions which he would like to have answered? but he observed that he would not do so if it would be an interruption. On being assured that it would not interrupt me in the least, Dr. Hastings then inquired:

1. Whether I did not take the position in my Pamphlet that the Synod of Missouri should not or could not consistently unite with the Assembly? and

2. How I reconciled that position with the fact of being myself a member of this Presbytery which is one of the Presbyteries of that Assembly?

Dr. Hatfield then rose and stated that he also would like to ask—

3. Whether I did not favor the union of the Synod with another body than the Assembly, viz.: the Dutch Reformed Church?

Dr. Alexander deprecated these questions as they would only lead to a discussion of those old troubles from 1861 onwards.

I resumed by observing that I would frankly answer the inquiries made, as I had no concealments nor mental reservation in this matter, but desired to deal with the case in perfect candor and would take pleasure in responding to any inquiries; and that I should certainly not now go into those troublesome matters as I had said in my Pamphlet what I had to say on that subject. In reply to Dr. Hastings' *first* inquiry, attention was called to the 4th resolution on p. 75 of the Pamphlet itself and it was read and is as follows:—

"*Resolved*, 4, That the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) finds in the record of

the General Assembly, North, sufficient reason to withhold, for the present, any offer of union with that body, and also, good cause to decline any overtures of union from it, as, we regret to say, we do not see how an organic union with it could now be effected on 'conditions mutually acceptable.' The hope of ultimate union by virtue of that body returning to the true theory of its standards, is still cherished, and whilst we heartily reciprocate all Christian and brotherly courtesies, we pray that God will bless our conscientious and dutiful testimony against their errors to the hastening of their recovery."

How do gentlemen read? they certainly should not overlook the qualifying clauses and expressions, "FOR THE PRESENT" and "NOW" and "THE HOPE OF ULTIMATE UNION, * * IS STILL CHERISHED."

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the position thus taken is reached as the conclusion of an argument based not simply on the deliverances of the Assemblies during the war, but especially on a review [Letter pp. 33-41] of the opinion of the Supreme Court of the U. S. delivered by Justice Miller in the Walnut street church case, which opinion is published in full in the appendix of the minutes of the last Assembly, was fully endorsed by that body as the accepted law on which the Presbyterian Church shall henceforth acquire and hold property and accordingly the Committee on the forthcoming digest was ordered to publish therein an abstract of it. * * *

I feel constrained to add the following testimonial from the pen of a venerable layman, fully 60 years of age, who has been a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church as long as I have been a member of it, and who has often taken a prominent part in all the courts of the church from the Session to the General Assembly,—a man who has been all his life a lawyer by profession and who has with honor worn the judicial ermine and whose exalted personal worth and professional ability and integrity entitle his opinion to a consideration amongst Presbyterians second to that of no man in America. I here give only extracts but shall, in another connection, have use for this testimonial in full over the name of the distinguished author. He (Judge Wm. T. Wood, now of Lexington, Missouri,) says:

"I have again read your letter addressed to the Synod of Missouri, and with much care, and am more than ever heretofore impressed with its value, not only because of the truth and accuracy of its statements of the matters involved in the issues between the General Assembly (O. S.) and our Synod, but because also of the fact that the real, true and great principles involved, have been distinctly and plainly developed and stated, and discussed with so much of fairness and at the same time with a clearness and ability that will leave no honest, candid, and intelligent Presbyterian an excuse for ignorance as to the true causes of the attitude and state of our Synod.

"Your letter with a logic unanswerable has asserted and vindicated these principles, so that not a word is needed from any quarter for their support. The resolutions you recommended, at the close of your letter in the scheme you present, from 1 to 6 inclusive (pp. 74—75) embrace

substantially all the grounds and questions of difference between our Synod and the General Assembly.

"It gives me great pleasure, to say that I most cordially and fully approve your views and positions, as to the true law of the civil cases, you refer to as having been decided in Missouri and Kentucky and Pennsylvania, and by the Supreme Court of the United States. The law as decided by the Supreme Court of the U. S. is not sound law, and as laid down by Justice Miller, will not I think be again affirmed by that or any other able Court. That decision resulted from a want of proper knowledge in the Court of Church organization and Government. These cases however you have handled so well, so justly and ably, that I am more than content with what you have said, and will fearlessly invite the criticism of lawyers, feeling sure that your views and positions as to these cases, will have the approval and concurrence of the learned of the profession. * * * *

"I will now only add, the expression of a wish that your *Letter* may be printed and published in some more durable form."

In answer to Dr. Hasting's 2d inquiry—

Dr. Hatfield interrupted and insisted that his inquiry should be next answered. I assured him that his inquiry would not be forgotten, but preferred to answer the questions in the order in which they were put, 1st, as to the position assigned the Synod of Missouri, next as to myself, and finally in regard to the Dutch Reformed Church.

In answer, therefore, to Dr. Hastings' 2d inquiry respecting my own consistency in the matter of Church relations, I will use another extract from my *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri, beginning at the bottom of p. 41:

"There are those of you who can testify that I was hopeful that the union of the two Assemblies, would result in wiser and more conservative counsels than had prevailed during the war. I had witnessed a great breaking away from the intensely vengeful and intolerant spirit that was so universal, and was, as ever, disposed to give men, and also organizations, the full benefit of their inconsistencies. Neither men nor Church courts are bound to be consistent with themselves. If so, every sinner would go to perdition; but men are bound to be consistent with the truth. I was too hopeful, that with the passions of the hour would also dissolve the errors of the hour, especially in Church matters, under the light of God's truth. But the new Assembly, thus far, has, I fear, shown itself fatally consistent with its components during the years immediately preceding the union. My connection with a Presbytery of that Assembly does not imply any individual approbation of the offensive acts. There are many individuals that have not bowed the knee to them. When I was received by the New York Presbytery, it was on motion and with knowledge that I was from a Presbytery of your Synod. An individual is not an ecclesiastical court, occupies no territory, and has no jurisdiction. For a Synod to join in organic relation with the same body, would be to avow accordance of view with it, instead of antagonism on the points of controversy which have given existence to your Synod. This would be to deliberately surrender the truth and then vainly hope to recover it. It would have been gratifying to me, in various ways, had the way been clear for you to unite with this Assembly. But the Detroit Assembly has placed matters beyond the hope of present recovery; and I pledge myself

to aid in the contest, already inaugurated, against this false and revolutionary ecclesiology. Whilst on its territory I can aid the present minority."

Following this, is a passage quoted from the pen of Dr. D. X. Junkin, containing language in disapprobation of the course of the Assembly quite as emphatic and strong as anything from my own pen, contained in my pamphlet.

And now, with reference to the Dutch Church, or as its legal style is, "The Reformed Church in America." The position taken in my Letter does favor, decidedly, the union of the Synod of Missouri with that body for the reason, that, when that Letter was written, no real obstacle in the way of consummating such a union was known by me to exist. The fact is, my position in that *Letter* is favorable to the *union on principle* of all the parts of our Presbyterian family into one glorious *Church*. Hence in the "Scheme" of action set forth in my Letter to the Synod of Missouri is found the following resolution:—

"*Resolved*, 3, That the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) is prepared and willing, *Deo volente*, to unite, *ex animo*, with any portion of the visible Church of Christ upon the basis above indicated." p. 75.

This union may not be accomplished in our day, may never come to pass, but it is an event hoped for, anticipated in the future by most. I have the satisfaction in any event, of feeling that I have made my contribution, however slight it may be, toward the attainment of a more united and harmonious state of things than at present marks the condition of our Presbyterian churches.

"To the extent that the followers of Christ agree in doctrine and Church order, and especially to the extent that those who receive the same standards agree as to the sense and application of those standards, so as to be able to dwell together in unity and peace, and to coöperate in the labors of the gospel, exempt from strife and confusion, there is great strength, comfort and encouragement in union, and also in wealth and numbers. But any organic ecclesiastical union, in the present state of *Ecclesiology*, except as it is based on harmonious views of the doctrines of grace, and of the nature, power and duties of the Church and Church courts, it is humbly submitted, tends to forfeit the consummation so devoutly desired of the ultimate unification of Christians as one visible Church, and must be rather a source of weakness and warring than of power and peace. The laboratory illustration of procuring and keeping the elements pure and unadulterated, in order to an ultimate perfect combination of such as are endued with proper affinities, is pertinent here." Letter, p. 26.

Mr. Moderator, a word more and I am done. If I had cherished a malignant desire that this Presbytery should disgrace itself, and put upon its minutes a record of that disgrace, nothing could have pleased me better than that it should adopt this report entire; and I would have said nothing, or at least, have pursued that course which would have favored the adoption of as much of its language as possible. I am free to confess,

in view of some circumstances of this case, that I have felt the temptation. But I did not think it consistent with a true sense of honor and fair dealing to sit in silence and see the Presbytery stumble into a conclusion which it would certainly not entertain if in possession of facts which it was in my power to give. This is the sole reason of my having occupied your attention with my statements on this occasion, as I feel entirely assured that the action that may be taken is a matter of more importance to the Presbytery than to myself.

Dr. Hall expressed himself as only the better satisfied now that his motion for the recommittal of the report should be adopted. He was very glad to hear the clear statements and explanations that had been made; and he presumed that the Committee would act in view of the information given, especially as all opposition to the overture of the Assembly for the Union of the Synod had been disclaimed.

Yes, said Dr. Paxton, he is in favor of union if the Assembly will eat its words. The explanation is worse than the offence charged.

Well, said Dr. Laws, if there is to be a union somebody has to "eat words." "The explanation" amounts to this, that the Pamphlet speaks for itself on the matter of Union.

Dr. Adams stated that he had prepared a paper at an early stage of the business which seemed to him to meet the case, and which he read as follows:

"The *Presbytery of New York*, highly approving of the fraternal overture of the last General Assemby relative to the [O. S.] Synod of Missouri, can not but deprecate the revival and discussion of any matters of unhappy memory preceding the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian church.

"But inasmuch as the pamphlet referred to, is the production of an individual, for which the Presbytery has no responsibility whatever, they deem it proper to take no further action in the premises."

Dr. Hatfield accepted this paper, and presented it for the Committee as a substitute, and a motion was made and seconded to adopt it accordingly.

Dr. Laws hoped there would be regularity in the proceedings, and inqured how the Presbytery could entertain, from the Committee another report as a substitute for its original report whilst a motion to recommit that report was pending? and, also, how the chairman alone, without consultation with other members of that Committee, could, as had just been done, adopt this paper and offer it as the report of the Committee?

Dr. Hall's motion to recommit was then adopted.

The members of the Committee on the floor, without rising from their seats, signified to Dr. Hatfield their approval of Dr. Adams' paper as a substitute for the report recommitted. It was immediately presented and unanimously adopted.

Dr. Laws then stepped across the floor to Dr. Hatfield and asked to be allowed to copy the original report. Dr. Hatfield peremptorily refused. Dr. Speer, who was sitting next to him, was asked to witness the refusal, but on giving no heed to the request, Dr. Laws stepped back to his seat and asked the Moderator's attention to the fact that he had made the request and been refused.

Dr. Hatfield stated that he did not think that the brother had a right to demand the paper, as it had not been adopted by the Presbytery and was a private paper.

Dr. Laws stated that he had not demanded it as a *right*, but asked it as a courtesy that he should be allowed to copy that paper as a part of the history of the case; and that he only called the Moderator's attention to it that the fact, that he had been denied a copy of that paper, might be put beyond dispute.

"Extract from the Minutes of the Presbytery of New York, dated Feb. 3d, 1873.

'The Committee to whom was referred the Pamphlet of Rev. Dr. Laws, in making their report, recommend to the Presbytery the adoption of the following minute:

The Presbytery of New York, highly approving of the fraternal overture of the last General Assembly to the Old School Synod of Missouri, cannot but deprecate the revival and discussion of any matters of unhappy memory preceding the Reunion of the two Branches of the Presbyterian Church. But inasmuch as the pamphlet referred to is the production of an individual, for which the Presbytery has no responsibility whatever, they deem it proper to take no further action in the premises.'

A True Copy from the Minutes of the Presbytery of New York.

[Signed.] S. D. ALEXANDER,

Stated Clerk."

For obvious reasons I did not vote on this paper either yea or nay, as it was my own case that was in issue; nor did I feel called on to engage in any discussion of it, nor to protest against it; but I shall now make some observations upon it *entirely* in the light of its being an action of the Presbytery:—

1. The ground assigned for appointing the committee, was that my pamphlet was "reported as reflecting on the Presbyterian church." This action of the Presbytery does not give so much as a crumb of comfort to the dear brethren who originated that "report," or thoughtlessly gave it currency. "For without are * * whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

2. The equivocation as to the responsibility of the Presbytery is

doubtless an inadvertence of language, the purpose of the body being to disclaim responsibility, as a Presbytery, for the arraigned Pamphlet. But the point of importance in this connection is this; the author of the Pamphlet never pretended that the Presbytery had any responsibility for it whatever. It was not he, but they, and they only, who were opposing the Pamphlet, that sought to *use* the Presbytery for the censure of it and of its author. This was a virtual abandonment, by them, of the field of argument and a vain appeal to the arbitrament of authority—and a failure.

3. As to the friendly overture, the Presbytery does not more heartily *approve* of that than does that Letter to the Synod. Nor does The New York Presbytery indicate in its action that the union contemplated in this "fraternal overture," is capable of realisation otherwise than as pointed out. The General Assembly desires "*to be brought upon grounds of closer union with the* [Synod] * * *on conditions mutually acceptable.*" Says the prophet, Amos, 3: 3., "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The Letter did not create the separation nor the ground of it, but earnestly and faithfully undertook to interpret the differences that exist in such a way as to bring about a mutual understanding, and if possible, an ultimate agreement.

4. But the Presbytery "cannot but deprecate the revival and discussion of any matters of unhappy memory preceding the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian church." However, it cannot be overlooked that the records of both The General Assemblies glory in the very events, here spoken of as "matters of unhappy memory."

General Assembly, (N. S.) 1865.

"Our record as a Church we commit to the calm judgment of posterity, in the full assurance that there is neither a line nor a word the Christian patriotism of the future will desire to erase."

General Assembly, (O. S.) 1866.

"After carefully reviewing the whole course of these years of strife and alienation, we find nothing to recall or modify in the deliverances that have been made."

Was ever greater self-complacency put on record and published to the world? There is *a long stride in the right direction* between these complacent minutes of the General Assemblies and the conception which The New York Presbytery has of these things, as "*matters of unhappy memory.*" Let the General Assembly now go one step farther in the same direction, and manfully do as others have done and as the world of sinners is continually exhorted to do, *confess and forsake these errors.* "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Prov. xxviii: 13. A public body cannot ignore its own record, nor can it reasonably ask or expect others to do so. But it can and ought to put itself unequivocally right upon

its record, and that, too, consistently with the truth. Whatever may have been the sentiments or purposes of generous and magnanimous individuals, yet, *as a matter of fact*,—

"These [matters of unhappy memory] remain uncancelled upon the records of both the courts now amalgamated into one. No disavowal of them has been made, as of words inconsiderately uttered in times of high excitement. No counter declaration has been filed, gathering up the sacred truth of God in a new proclamation of the spirituality and independence of that kingdom which is not of this world."

Moreover the responsibility for the "revival and discussion" of these matters, in the present case, rests on the General Assembly itself; and thus the case is put in the 2d paragraph of my Letter:

"I was also glad to meet there (at the Synod of Missouri) a member of the committee appointed in May last, by the General Assembly with which my Presbytery is connected, to visit you at this meeting. The object of that visit is "a closer union" of your Synod with that Assembly, "on conditions mutually acceptable." This unexpectedly opens up the whole question again of your status and relations, which can only be wisely determined by a reference to the past as well as to the present. And I need not say that you should act upon a candid, unselfish and unimpassioned judgment, formed in view of all the facts, present and past. There are not wanting a good many well-meaning and easy-going people who indolently sing themselves to sleep, repeating as a lullaby the proverb, *Let by-gones be by-gones*, or—

'Let the dead Past bury its dead!'—*Psalm of Life.*

This is all well and very right, so far as resentful feelings and unchristian tempers are concerned. 'But he is a great blockhead who learns nothing from the past.' And we should also be admonished by other verses from that Psalm of Life, &c."

I respectfully submit that what is to be deprecated most is *not* the "revival and discussion" of these matters, but the *matters themselves.* The Scriptural order is this: "The wisdom that is from above is *first* pure, *then* peaceable." "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

As this *deprecation* only contemplates what preceded the union, of course it leaves untouched one main discussion of the pamphlet, whether the church shall sanction the wild action of the last General Assembly, as that action has occurred years subsequent to the union. I say whether *The Church* shall sanction that action, for *The Presbyterian Church* is in many very important respects an entirely distinct thing from The General Assembly. To confound the two things is gross inadvertence. Hence to oppose or to overthrow an action of the Assembly is neither to oppose nor to overthrow The Presbyterian Church, but, on the contrary, such opposition may be a bounden duty and a service to that Church. Prelatical Presbyterianism is infinitely less *tolerable* than downright Prelatical Episcopacy or Papacy, because the *theory* of them is consistent with their *practice.* But the theory (profession) of Presbyterianism is *not* compati-

ble with prelatical practice, either by its councils, or by its individual bishops; and the deliverances of the General Assembly are not, as the U. S. Supreme Court evidently supposed, *Canons* by which that church is governed.

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, Feb.* 14, 1873.]

DR. LAWS AND THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW YORK.

The *Presbytery of New York* has just missed placing itself alongside of the Assembly of 1866. But for the common sense (we will not say, charity) of Drs. Adams, Alexander, Hastings, and others, it would have achieved an exceedingly bad pre-eminence and written itself down an —a hyena.

The Presbytery met on the 3d inst. The Committee to whom Dr. Laws' *Letter* had been referred, and who, as their chairman, Dr. Hatfield, said, had sought the advice of leading men in various parts of the church, thought that it was not best to institute a process of trial, (!) but that it was due to the Presbytery to protest against the language of the *Letter*, which sought to thwart the good intentions of the Assembly and contained a labored indictment of that body. And so, the report emptied we know not how many bottles of wrath upon poor Dr. Laws, after the manner of Monfort, Thomas McLean and the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. But, fortunately for its authors, and for the honor of religion, and for the cause of peace, this report was absolutely suppressed—*strangled*. Characterized by Dr. Alexander as a piece of personal invective, Dr. Adams moved to lay it on the table. This motion was withdrawn, so as to give an opportunity to the framers of the report to defend it, which they essayed to do, one of its friends frankly stating that he had never read the *Letter*, but he was willing to condemn Dr. Laws on the "say-so" of the *Presbyterian!* On Dr. Hall's motion, the report was recommitted to the same gentlemen, who without leaving their seats, accepted a substitute, which Dr. Adams had prepared, and presented it as their amended report. It was unanimously adopted and is as follows:

"The *Presbytery of New York*, highly approving of the fraternal overture of the last General Assembly relative to the [O. S.] Synod of Missouri, can not but* deprecate the revival and discussion of any matters of unhappy memory preceding the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian church.

"But, inasmuch as the pamphlet referred to, is the production of an individual for which the Presbytery has no responsibility whatever, they deem it proper to take no further action in the premises."

This minute is unquestionably mild, and we have no doubt that the sober second thought of the Presbytery hailed it as a happy escape from a bad fix and great turmoil into which some hot-headed, implacable *radicals* had nearly plunged the church. But, while our metropolitan brethren are certainly courteous and have skilfully quieted what threatened to be a terrific storm, their action unjustly reflects upon Dr. Laws and is obscure as to their own responsibility. They forget, first, that Dr. Laws' *Letter* appeared sometime *after* the Synod had definitely acted on the question of ecclesiastical relations, and, therefore, could not

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* What precedes this mark is all that was retained of the original report: what follows is Dr. Adams' substitute.

have influenced that action, and, secondly, that while the argument of the *Letter* illustrates the wisdom of the Synod's decision to seek organic anion elsewhere rather than with the Northern Presbyterian church, it does not at all interfere with "the last General Assembly's fraternal overture" respecting more friendly relations, and co-operation with our Synod. And the wording of their minute leaves us in doubt whether they disclaim responsibility for Dr. Laws or for his *Letter*. Of course they are responsible for him as a Presbyter. Equally of course, they have no more concern with his pamphlet than they have with Dr. Hodge's annual review, in the *Repertory*, of the General Assembly. This is a free country, and the Presbyterian church is a free church.

Perhaps, a new edition of the *Letter* would enable Dr. Laws to furnish each of his brethren, who so narrowly escaped condemning him, with a copy. And many others would likely avail themselves of the opportunity to examine what the *Presbyterian*, of Philadelphia, denounces as a *defamation of the church*, but which the New York Presbytery deliberately refuses to censure.

CONCLUSION.

These pages are published that they may accompany the pamphlet or letter addressed to the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) about four months since. It is worthy of remark that none of the numerous facts embodied in that *résumé* have been questioned in any quarter. The readers of that document, therefore, can feel increased assurance that the views therein presented are reliable; for the facts are given with sufficient fulness to enable an intelligent reader to form his own opinion, as he goes along, quite independently of the accompanying comment. This puts before each reader the proper test and ordeal of the views submitted.

What these two pamphlets contain that has been written or spoken by myself was impromptu, that is, constrained by the immediate circumstances of each occasion, unsought and unanticipated and when other matters made urgent claims upon me. Such is the fact, and there is no affectation in asking that the reader will make some allowance in view of it. But the general views expressed have not been formed hastily, nor, it is believed, superficially; and upon their soundness and justness, let time and history decide.

But I cannot take my leave of this general subject, upon which I do not expect to be called to speak again, without giving utterance to some additional thoughts.

There is at this time, it would seem, a double embarrassment pressing upon our Presbyterian church with an urgency never surpassed.

To get the good out of any system that is in it, there must be a *strict adherence* to its true principle and theory, and a wise and consistent *adaptation* of it to varying necessities. The church is not a fossil but a living organisation. A great deal has been said of late about the number of ministers in the Presbyterian Church who are not pastors nor statedly

preaching to congregations, and there is a pronounced prejudice current and fostered against all such. It may be conceded that there is some foundation for all this, even after due allowance is made for a vast variety of work, not necessarily comprehended either in Pastoral Theology or Homiletics, which, in the present state of the Church almost inevitably devolves, to some extent at least, upon those who have the vows of the ministry upon them. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." It is apprehended that very few Presbyterian ministers live of the gospel who do not preach it. It is believed that sustentation is not, to any considerable extent, burdened with taking care of these drones. "If any would not work, neither should he eat." But, back of mitigating circumstances, has it been sufficiently considered that the bare existence of such a large—and may I not add, respectable class of ecclesiastical inoperatives is an *effect* which calls for *explanation* as really as for lamentation or condemnation? It is usual in scientific inquiries, and it is doubtless so here, that the cause is not simple but complex. The antecedent determining circumstances, the concauses, are numerous and diverse. Among these may doubtless be instanced a *lack* of strict adherence to our Presbyterian system, and also a lack of present adaptation of that system to existing exigencies.

Explain it as we may our system, as facts and experience show, does not bring together existing supply and demand—the supply of ministers and the demand for them on the part of the church and the world. It is not true that the blame for this state of things rests wholly upon the unoccupied ministers, however great may be their share of the blame. Not a few of them, too, are in their desires and accomplishments for usefulness not one whit behind the chiefest of those who disparage them. The fact is, our *system* just here, is defective and needs a new chapter on economics providing for this thing something positive and not merely a back door of demission. It is not true that the Church don't want these men. She does want them, just them and multitudes more like them, or no better if her wants were properly interpreted by her appointments. Whether the Methodist general superintendency may not be suggestive of something within the sphere, and compatible with the theory of our ministerial parity, as providing a new and much needed adaptation of the changeless principles of our polity and remedying a palpable deficiency, it may be worth the while of those who have the ear and the confidence of the Church at large seriously to consider. It is believed that, truly understood and properly handled, the Presbyterian organism is as flexible as an ecclesiastical Darwinian could ask, if only those constitutive of its present life have the prevailing strength to take on fully the adaptations demanded by its surroundings—by its present "*environment.*"

But, on the other hand, it is obvious enough, that one of the necessary conditions of such adaptation is a faithful adherence to the fundamental laws of its organisation and existence. To ignore or to unwarrantably depart from the accepted constitution and organic law of the Church, is to invite and to induce deep-seated degeneration and disintegration. The practical failure of Presbyterianism and the success of Christianity are not incompatible nor contradictory propositions.

Every officer of the Presbyterian Church, every elder and minister in it, has, in the acceptance of his official position, avowed his acceptance and approval of the government and discipline set forth in the standards of that Church. That is a fixed point, a settled matter, as much so as the acceptance of the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in God's word. If there is, as there may be, occasion for any change in these standards, they themselves prescribe the mode of effecting it. Faithful adherence to the existing standards and constitution of the Church is, therefore, presumed to be the honest mind of the officers of the Church. If errors or departures, in any respect, occur, as they do and ever will, it is plainly a matter of conscience and simple minded honor to renounce them, come back to first principles, do first works over again, and still again if need be; and a failure to do so engenders moral weakness, both external and internal.

Therefore, as a means of replacing our Presbyterian Church upon that pedestal from which she has fallen and of extricating her from certain errors and entanglements which, as I have shown, compromise her historic and constitutional consistency and greatly weaken, if they do not tend to ultimately destroy, her distinctive influence for good; in the exercise of *a true loyalty* to Christ, her only sovereign, whose rule is purely spiritual; in the interests of desired peace and unity, of known truth and of conscientious duty; out of a becoming respect for the opinions of the Christian world (Matt. v: 14-16); and that those who in time past have been wronged may be righted, and those of the future warned by our errors,—let the representatives of the church in General Assembly convened,

1. Reconsider and recall the mistaken approbation of the decision of the U. S. Supreme Court in the Walnut Street Church case, for two reasons:—1, The civil courts have no right to abandon the exercise of the functions with which the law invests them in their jurisdiction over, and protection of, the property of the Church on the established principles of the law; and 2, for the farther reason that such a ruling, *pro tanto* transforms the ecclesiastical into civil courts of last resort. If the decision of the Church court is final, and its constitutionality and regularity cannot be inquired into by the civil court when property, rights and interests depend thereon, then it is farcical to seek redress in the civil courts. Minutes 1872, p. 52.

2. Countermand the order for inserting in the forthcoming Digest an abstract of that opinion. Minutes 1872, p. 53.

3. Proclaim it as the solemn judgment of the Assembly that, in spite of any lapses therefrom, it is the true doctrine of the standards of the Presbyterian Church that "civil affairs" which belong to the sphere of the individual conscience and private judgment, such as systems of labor, political dogmas, and conduct respecting the nature, form, administration or change of human government, are not to be handled nor concluded by the utterances of the Church courts thereon, whether in their moral or their political bearing, but are to be left where Christ left the payment of tribute (Matt. xxii: 15-22; Mark xii: 13-17; Luke xx: 20-26), viz.: within the sphere of the individual conscience before God and of individual liberty, not to be infringed nor restrained by any authority unless that authority can be distinctly shown from the word of God as received and set forth in the standards of the Church: and let all past actions incompatible therewith be deprecated and renounced. Con. F., xxxi, 4.

The very essence of Christian liberty consists in our freedom from the interposition or mediation of any *human authority*, in Church or State, between us and God.

4. "Assert the non-secular and non-political character of the church *as the Kingdom of Christ*, spiritual in its nature and mission, and entirely separated from and independent of the State:" disavow all approval of any acts or utterances implying or expressing any concession to the State, in its civil or military powers, of any influence over or rightful control of the affairs or interests of the church, except to protect its members in their rights as citizens, and its property on the established principles of the law.

5. Decline to take any part in "the Centennial Anniversary of the Independence of the United States," so as to avoid even the appearance of political affiliation with any earthly power or form of government. As religious liberty is equally compatible with any form of human government righteously administered, it is not proper for the councils of the church to assume any political affiliations or antagonisms. If the church endorse Republics on principle, then Monarchies may, on principle, oppose the church. Minutes 1872, p. 69.

6. Reassert, in language that will silence cavil and relieve from all doubt and misunderstanding, the fundamental principle that the constitution of the Presbyterian Church is to us the medium and the sole medium, as the simple and accepted exposition of God's word, through which the General Assembly and the other courts of the Church receive power from Christ, and according to which, without any grace or prerogative of infallibility or inspired discretion, that power is to be exercised.

The Courts or Assemblies of the Church, including the General Assembly, exist by the express law of the Church, and must be in subjection to the same, and are not competent at any time, or under any circumstances, to act without such authority or contrary thereto, or to attempt to supply any supposed deficiency therein, under any exigency except in the manner and way therein provided. (See Con. F., ch. I., 1 and 6, and chs. XXIII, XXV., XXX and XXXI; Form G., chs. I., II., VIII—XII., XIII., 1, XIV., 1, &c.; The Discip., ch. I., 1, &c.; The Directory.)

7. Define, as there is eminent reason for so doing, that when it is laid down as a fundamental principle of Presbyterian Church government "*that a majority shall govern*," the necessary limitation is that it "shall govern" in subordination to the express constitution of the Church and only as it prescribes. Form Gov. XII.*

We accept our Presbyterian standards not as of human origin and authority, but as drawn out of the word of God, and as being to us, as a church, his own word in a practical and systematized form. Hence the intolerableness of any church court or Assembly assuming to exercise powers not recognized by the standards or from which it is restrained by them.

8. Recognise the constitutional right of any lower Court to interpose its authority to stay, within its bounds, the operation of any deliverance of the General Assembly when such deliverance is deemed of questionable constitutionality, until the ruling shall be sent down to the Presbyteries, as provided. Form Gov. ch. XII. 6. The Presbyterian Church, unlike the prelatical churches, is not governed by the decisions of its General Assembly or Chief Council as *Canons* of binding authority, but solely by the standards of the Church and as they prescribe. Properly and technically it has no statute law.

9. Let the United Assembly make an explicit disavowal of all acquiescence in or approbation of the wrongful and unwarrantable deliverance embodied in the, so-called, *ipso facto* resolutions of 1866, which was carried into effect only against the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri, and which condemned unrighteously and unheard between one and two hundred of the ministers and elders of the Church who had signed or voted for the Declaration and Testimony; and let all the reparation possible be openly made for the injury inflicted upon two Synods and the good name of many individuals. If there be, although there should not be, a doubt whether the United Assembly is competent to take *such* retrospective action, then let the injured brethren have the benefit of the doubt.

10. In like manner recall in terms the censorious and condemnatory charges of schism, heresy and blasphemy, and other opprobrious epithets uttered against the Southern Church. Let that be done explicitly

which it is contended was done by implication in the act of 1870, to wit:

WHEREAS, This General Assembly believes that the interest of the kingdom of our Lord throughout our entire country would be greatly promoted by healing all unnecessary divisions; and,

WHEREAS, This General Assembly desires the speedy establishment of cordial fraternal relations with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church of the United States, commonly known as the Southern Presbyterian church, upon terms of mutual confidence, respect, Christian honor and love; &c.

The United Assembly cannot, in so grave a case, stand on the point of doing explicitly and *directly* what is conceded as having been here done and intended by implication. Even the appearance of indirection should not be allowed to mar such a proceeding, for the reproachful imputations and dishonoring judicial accusations which should be utterly renounced, are wholly incompatible with the "mutual confidence, respect, Christian honor and love," upon which the Assembly avowed its desire to establish cordial fraternal relations, and cannot possibly be drawn within the categories of "rules or precedents."

11. Let the Church South be recognized, in the territory occupied by it, as doing the Master's work after the Presbyterian fashion; and consequently let its field of operations not be treated as missionary territory of this Assembly, and let the money and help expended on that field flow through the established channels of that Church. Consistency and fairness would suggest a similar course towards the Synod of Missouri (O. S.)

12. Appoint a committee with power (1) to restore all property and advantages from whomsoever acquired, and (2) to dismiss all law-suits pending in contravention of these utterances.

Notice a striking feature of the concurrent declaration, "That no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both bodies, shall be of any authority, in the reunited body, EXCEPT in so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon."

Is it generally known that this Assembly's Synod holds church property and Lindenwood College in Missouri under this *Exception?* and that there is an important church case now pending before the Supreme Court of that State on the same *exception* as its sole foundation? The Walnut Street church case was likewise held before the U. S. Supreme Court by this very exception. And so in other less distinguished cases. By this *exception*, therefore, as it now stands expressed and interpreted, the United General Assembly is upholding with a vengeance and in the most oppressive form, the unconstitutional actions from 1861 onwards, and especially that of the Assembly O. S. 1866. Let the Assembly wash its hands of all the cases that have grown out of these actions, by taking

them out of this general and oppressive exception. Let the committee be appointed and make thorough work of it.

13. Let a general intermediary between unoccupied ministers, and vacant churches, and needy fields, be instituted as an organic working feature of our system, with the view of bringing together ministerial supply and demand in a manner not now done, in fact not capable of being done by the sporadic efforts of separate churches, Presbyteries or Synods, situated as is our church at present in its widely extended field.

14. Let such of these actions as the 3d, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 13th which may involve a construction of the constitution or should have the force of a constitutional rule, be sent down to the Presbyteries for their approval.

In what has now been submitted, we have not only destructive criticism, but also constructive substitution; not merely a negative, but likewise a positive element; not simply the removal of incongruous parts that mar its beauty, but the suggestion of remedial and reconstructive measures that will give strength to this house of the Lord and make it a praise in the land.

When two business concerns unite, it would be construed as fraud for them thereby to attempt to ignore or evade the prior liabilities of the separate establishments. The two Assemblies united in the New Assembly their trusts, credits, assets and advantages, and devolved on it likewise their financial and ecclesiastical liabilities. Such is the situation and those who have righteous claims of any kind outstanding, should not for any reason or pretext be ignored, or left with any reasonable demand unsatisfied. The New Body can well afford to clear up all old scores, and ought to do so from a sense of duty and as extricating its new career from all unhappy complications with the past. Its only criterion of consistency is found in the standards of the Church, a strict adherence to which is our only guarantee of the attainment or maintenance of unity and peace as well as of the preservation of the faith in its purity.

The above summary presents the leading points of difference, deficiency and difficulty which stare us in the face, turn which way we will, and they must be recognised and surmounted as a prerequisite of regaining our unity, and attaining the efficiency of which our Presbyterian church is capable, but of which it now only dreams. I make no apology for offering it, as the truth is ever its own best witness and vindication. The case imperatively demands attention, and others may be stimulated to consider it more thoroughly and to analyze it more judiciously. Were an apology needed for this contribution it might be fully found in the assertion of my rights against the unmerited personal abuse heaped upon me for discussing the affairs of a church which in my

measure I have served during many of the best years of my life, as faithfully and successfully as any man in it, and also in the farther fact that no minister of this church has suffered more personally and officially than I have, in consequence of the very errors to which I have called attention. Neither flippancy nor indecent personal assaults can silence the just claims of considerations of such grave import.

"Indecent words admit of no defence,
For want of decency is want of sense."—POPE.

SAMUEL SPAHR LAWS.

New York, March 8th, 1873.

THE LAST WORD.

This pamphlet was completed, I supposed, before the following editorial paragraph attracted my attention in *The Presbyterian* of March 15th, 1873. It would hardly be just to Dr. Grier not to give him the benefit of his *last word* respecting what he calls "our controversy"—the *our*, in this case, it will be observed, being altogether one-sided. Controversy is usually *bilateral*, but in this case it has been eminently *unilateral*. I presume that the policy of this novel method of journalism is not so much to maintain the truth, as to impress the readers of this *organ* of the church with the preeminence of the editorial accomplishments displayed in its columns. Only read and doubt no more.

"CORRECTION.—The *Central Presbyterian*, in its last issue, referring to our controversy with the Rev. Dr. Laws, says: '*The Philadelphia Presbyterian*, while refusing to publish the reply of Dr. Laws to its assault upon him, proceeded at the same time, to make an extended comment on the suppressed article. Such an idea of fair play, we hope, does not widely prevail among the editorial fraternity.' We beg leave to say to the *Central Presbyterian*, that we purposely and carefully refrained from saying one word in regard to the contents of the communication which we declined to publish. Our comments related entirely to the pamphlet already published by Dr. Laws; and, to make this plain, we gave the number of the page in that pamphlet, from which we made our quotations. We did not allude to anything which was not before the public."

The Presbyterian, March 15, 1873.

Will the reader, for his own satisfaction, now turn back to pp. 110–112, and look at *The Presbyterian* editorial to which reference is here made?

To facilitate the reference some extracts from "January 18," and "March 15," will here be placed in parallel columns.

The Presbyterian,

March 15*th*, 1873, says,—

"We beg leave to say to the *Central Presbyterian* that we purposely and carefully *refrained from saying one word* in regard to *the contents of the communication* which we declined to publish."

The Presbyterian,

January 18*th*, 1873, says,—

"Dr. Laws uses language [that is, *in the suppressed communication*] in regard to the editor of this paper which must necessarily exclude him from the use of our columns. We shall not attempt to quote what Dr. Laws is pleased to say of us, and of our criticisms of his pamphlet. It is enough to say that he denounces us as actuated by wrath, malice and all uncharitableness, in our editorial comments upon the "Letter." We can hardly think that, after filling six columns with such bitter denunciations, he *could* expect us to be the vehicle of transmitting them to the world. There are some assailants on whom every man has the right to shut the doors of his office, or the columns of his journal. If Dr. Laws had chosen to send a reply as to our editorial somewhat in proportion to its length, and written in becoming language, we would undoubtedly have published it. But the long and abusive article which he has forwarded to us we most decidedly decline."

The question is not whether the language in the right hand column is true and proper. That is not now any matter of concern. The only point of present interest is simply this, does not that language as a matter of fact, relate to my suppressed reply.

It may be left to any person of the slightest intelligence and candor, to say whether *the words* of the right hand column have not "regard to the *contents* of the communication which we (Dr. Grier) declined to publish." And yet, when the *Central Presbyterian* holds the glass up for him to look at himself in this posture, Dr. Grier turns away from this image of moral obliquity and makes bad worse, by choosing the desperate alternative of deliberate,—I leave the reader *to supply* the epithet, with my compliments. One not acquainted with the peculiar controversial accomplishments of *this* "Editor," would scarcely be able to believe his own eyes in reading the above specimens of his "careful" writing. His cool editorial effrontery has even *deceived* the *Central Presbyterian* into a retraction of its just and pointed stricture in the following

language, which to one with all the facts before his mind, is seen to have the elements of a veritable *sarcasm.*

"*The Philadelphia Presbyterian* of last week corrects the remark in a recent number of this paper, viz., that while refusing to publish the reply of the Rev. Dr. Laws, it was made the subject of extended and unfriendly comment. This the *Presbyterian* says is a mistake, its criticisms having been founded upon the published pamphlet of Dr. Laws, not upon the reply referred to. We willingly correct the remark arising from a mistaken impression."—*Cent. Presb., March 19th*, 1873.

Again;

The Presbyterian,

March 15th, 1873, says,—

"Our comments related *entirely to the pamphlet, &c.;* and, to make this plain, we gave the number of the page in that pamphlet from which we made our quotations."

The Presbyterian,

Jan. 18th, 1873, says,—

"We said, further, that as Dr. Laws was himself deeply immersed in secular pursuits in the city of New York, it did not become him to set himself forth as the champion of a "spiritual" church, or as the utterer of a comprehensive condemnation of his own church because of its "secular" and "political" deliverances.

It is a small matter, comparatively, to say that when Dr. Laws wrote the pamphlet which is so complete an indictment against the church to which he belongs, and so thorough an acquittal of all the churches which have separated from it, he was a member of the New York Gold Room. Yet it adds very much to the singularity of this plea for the "spiritual," and this condemnation of the least taint of the "secular" in the acts of the church, that it should come from that quarter. Without at all condemning Dr. Laws for his daily employment, or affirming that his presence there was inconsistent with his calling as a minister of Christ, we are very clear in the conviction that the fact should have imposed silence upon him in the controversies of the church."

Could language be more completely in contradiction, again, than that of these two columns? The offensive personality of this language in the right hand column is only surpassed by the original editorial of Dec. 21, 1872. Here again, no forgetfulness, nor inadvertence can be pleaded in

palliation, as less than two months had elapsed and an editor always has his own file at hand.

Why, the most aggravated circumstance, in that article of Jan. 18th, was the repetition of false representations which had been plainly corrected in my *suppressed* Reply. Dr. Grier persisted in his misrepresentations of me in the face of the contradictory information which had been furnished him and which he refused to publish. He now says of this very editorial, thus persistent in the *repetition* of personalities, that it did not relate to me at all, but "entirely to the pamphlet." ?

When this editor says, "We did *not allude to anything* which was not before the public," does he forget that "*the long and abusive article*," as he was pleased to call my suppressed communication, was *not* before the public, nor Dr. Laws' personal affairs, otherwise than as they had been dragged there gratuitously in his own columns? I say gratuitously, for, in that very article, he says; "Our controversy with Dr. Laws is not a personal one."

The foot note of p. 121, will give the key to what Dr. Grier was attempting to do in quoting from the pamphlet and commenting thereon, and show that that also had a special "regard to the contents" of the suppressed reply.

The public will now be able to appreciate this critic at his true value. Criticisms from such a quarter cease to be formidable—I had almost said, respectable.

The talismanic "we" of the newspaper "Editor" does not entitle him to any special immunity from personal and public responsibility. "Messrs. Editors" is not an imaginary, impalpable, shadowy nonentity or myth, but a plain mortal man; and when the mask is lifted from the *Wegoism*, it is seen to have no more of the diviner's virtue in it than simple *Egoism*. What has been criticised from the columns of *The Presbyterian* was *editorial*. Therefore, whilst Dr. Grier may wince, he has no right to complain at being held responsible for it.

Dr. Grier took a wrong step at the very outset of this controversy. As an "Editor," his business might have been with the *Letter* but not with me. He should have had the moral courage to retrace that step, promptly, and the manliness to repair the wrong done. This would have saved me from a great deal of annoyance and trouble, and himself from the suicidal course which he has pursued,—a course, in what manner reconcileable with the principles of honor and truthfulness? An Editor who loosely writes regardless of the sacredness of facts, confronts you with unsustained assertions where you demand evidence, and abuses the confidence reposed in his position and his published word, prostitutes the press into a firebrand to curse and blight society. That a religious paper, such as *The Presbyterian*, should be thus used, adds the last degree of aggravation to the offence of the culprit. The religious

editorial fraternity should not, for the peace of the Church, retain the name of *such* an one upon their rolls. Most assuredly, henceforth, more than one will never read anything editorial or communicated, in the columns of this paper under its present editorial auspices, with the least degree of confidence. No man acquires suddenly—*per saltem*—such traits as have been exhibited. I feel no satisfaction, however, but an unfeigned mortification at having been so much as even the *occasion* of their disclosure. But there is a tribunal before which we must all appear, more august than that of man or of public opinion. *Every man's work shall be made manifest. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self.*

And now I once more lay down my pen. I have not sought and do not seek personal controversy, but I do not shrink from it when the necessity is laid upon me. The truth is sacred, and when the alternative is presented of defending myself in its interest, there is only one choice possible. Our religion gives as little countenance to pusillanimity as to arrogance. Its meekness is not craven; the humility it inculcates is not that of a Uriah Heep. *Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed we intreat.*

Μηδείς σου περιφρονείτω.—Paul.

S. S. L.

[From the *Central Presbyterian*, March 5th, 1873.]

"Rev. Dr. Laws.—The article of Dr. Baird will serve to set the case of this brother in a just light."—*Editorial.*

"*For the Central Presbyterian.*

"REV. DR. LAWS, HIS LETTER, AND HIS ANSWERS.

"Mr. Editor,—Some time since I read a notice in your columns of the able and exhaustive discussion which the Rev. S. S. Laws, LL. D., had published of the action of the Northern General Assembly towards the Synod of Missouri, and other cognate matters. The chief reply to this letter which has been attempted was by the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*, and consisted mainly in an attack on Dr. Laws personally, charging him with being a secularized clergyman, whose daily business led him to Wall Street. Dr. Laws replied to this letter, and denied the Editor's allegations. The *Presbyterian* refused to publish this article, but it has, I believe, been issued in pamphlet form, though I have seen no copy of it. In declining to publish it, the Editor of the *Presbyterian* ignored Dr. Laws' denial, but reiterated his allegations. This drew from Dr. Laws a brief statement, denying that he was secularized or ever had voluntarily withdrawn from his proper ministerial work; and denying that his daily business led him to Wall Street.

To this the *Presbyterian* rejoined by quoting from the records of the Gold Room to show that Dr. Laws had been a member of it, (which Dr. Laws never denied,) and that he had sold out his ticket of membership subsequently to the time of writing his letter.

To this Dr. Laws replied by saying he was still a member of both the Stock Exchange and of the Gold Room,* but that nevertheless for more than six years he had ceased to be a regular visitor at either, and that for more than [for nearly] four years he had ceased to have any secular occupation whatever which would interfere with the full discharge of any ministerial work which the providence of God might open before him.

Dr. Laws, in his card in the *Presbyterian*, speaks of having been providentially driven from his work; but he fails to explain what that Providence of God was, and therein does himself great injustice. As I happen to know the facts, I deem it right to make them public.

In the winter of 1861–2, Dr. Laws was quietly engaged in his proper work, at Fulton, Mo., having at the meeting of Synod in October resigned the Presidency of Westminster College. While thus occupied, and no charge having been made against him as a wrong-doer of any kind, he was arrested by order of the United States Provost Marshal at Fulton, and required to take an oath which I am free to say no honest man who had the intelligence to understand the Constitution of the United States and the meaning of the oath, would take without perjury.

[* My ticket of membership had been sold, but I was not aware of it till afterwards. So that at the time the Presbyterian made its first attack on me, Dec. 21st, 1872, I was not a member of either of the exchanges. But I wish it distinctly understood that I attach no importance to this circumstance, as I should not hesitate an instant to secure membership in each of these exchanges again, if I were in business that made it an object. The foolish impressions in this regard are founded on gross ignorance.—L.]

Not only was he required to take this oath, but this same officer demanded of him security in the sum of $5,000, that he would speak no word and perform no act inconsistent with that oath. Many of your readers know what all this was designed for—nothing else than to despoil him of his goods. Dr. Laws, as an honest man, declined to take the oath; and as a prudent man, too wise to be caught in a snare set before his eyes, declined to give the bond. Consequently, for the crime of refusing to place his property within the reach of the cormorants who in those days wore shoulder straps and brass buttons, he was cast into prison. While there, he was denied the right and the privilege of ministering spiritually to his fellow-prisoners of other wards, who were neglected by those false brethren who, if not implicated in his arrest, at all events connived at it. A distinguished lawyer, a relative of Dr. Laws, made an earnest, able, and (to honest men aiming to do their duty,) an irresistible appeal for his release, on the ground that he had committed no offence and that no offence was charged against him. I have had the opportunity of reading this letter and also the answer of the Provost Marshal to it. He distinctly states that Dr. Laws was not charged with any offence, but was imprisoned because he would not take the oath offered him and give the bond required. After several weeks, [months,] delay, he was banished to the "loyal" States, to which Europe was afterwards added. Here then is a history of the providences of God, by which Dr. Laws was driven from his ministerial work, and compelled to engage in some secular occupation. The ministers of the North were too "loyal" to countenance a man under banishment by "the best government on earth;" and hence, Dr. Laws was given over to uncovenanted mercies, and allowed to work out his own salvation as best he could.

Dr. Laws went to Europe, and remained there for some time; but the war still going on he found it necessary to return to the United States, and engage in such occupation as might present itself before him, since the door of the ministry was closed by military power. New York was the safest place for a man under his circumstances, and to New York he went. His talents and experience were soon called into requisition in the organizing of the Gold Room, and he was made its first Chairman. In this position he remained for less than a year, when about the time of the close of the war, he resigned his office, and ceased to be a daily visitor at the Gold Room, in order to perfect an invention which will undoubtedly place his name high among that noble list of men of science who have proved themselves benefactors of mankind.

Now, the *Presbyterian* availed itself, unkindly and unfairly, of the ignorant prejudice in the minds of the masses against the Gold Room, in order to damage Dr. Laws. The people abroad attribute all the stock gambling and gold gambling operations of which they read accounts in the newspapers, and of which they sometimes experience the ill effects, to the Gold Room, and they deem every body connected with those boards to be gamblers. But this is wholly unjust; the Gold Board is a place just like the stock exchange, the tobacco, the corn, the cotton exchanges, all over the country, and just like those other exchanges it is designed as a convenience to business men. The whole business is conducted just like any other exchange. A man has gold to sell; he goes there to sell it. Another has gold to buy, he goes there to buy it. Otherwise, these transactions would take place in brokers and banking officers.—The rings formed, by which the gambling operations in gold are controlled, are sometimes made by members of the Board, and sometimes by those not members of it. But assuredly those not

implicated in the transactions, are not to be held responsible for the evil conduct of others. The Gold Board cannot be controlled the conduct of its members; but when it can convict them of evil conduct, it can and does expel them. The Gold Room has hundreds of members; the rings usually consist of a half dozen millionaires, who command so much money that they cannot be controlled by the rules of the Gold Board. To be a member of the Gold Board, is simply to be a banker; and the business done there, is just as honest and honorable and Christian, as that done in banking offices, and by Boards of Bank Directors, the world over.

The invention of Dr. Laws was that of the gold [and stock] telegraph. I do not understand it sufficiently well to explain it. * * * * *

Dr. Laws was hurrying his machine forward to get it ready for use, when President Johnston issued his proclamation of amnesty, by which Dr. Laws was freed from his parole and his banishment. His purpose was to finish it, and at once dispose of it, so as to be ready to resume his ministerial work; this was delayed, however, by an effort made to rob him of his invention. He was compelled to devote nearly a year to the contesting of this matter, which was finally settled incontrovertibly in his favor. He then put his invention into a thorough working condition, and had over 250 of the machines in full operation in New York, and more than forty in Philadelphia, when he sold out, about four years ago, to a company with a half million capital. He sold it at great sacrifice in order to be prepared for any opening which Providence might present before him. Such unkind charges as those to which the *Presbyterian* has given currency, I happen to know, have had a good deal to do in preventing his obtaining a suitable field of labor. His Northern friends we would judge from reading the *Presbyterian*, have no use for a man of his principles; and are ready, on any pretext or none, to cast out his name as evil. I would consider it a most fortunate circumstance for our church, should a door of usefulness be found for him amongst us. I have heard some say, that because of his connection with the Gold Room, they had lost confidence in him. My reply to this kind of judgment is, that but few of those who thus summarily and pragmatically condemn a brother without knowing the facts, would be willing to make the sacrifices of a pecuniary kind which I know Dr. Laws has made in order to free himself from the necessity of secular occupation, and to become ready for any work which God's providence might open.*

This statement is written without the procurement or the knowledge of Dr. Laws. I have written it as a sheer act of justice. In doing so, I have refrained from any allusion to the heart trials, the discouragements, the struggles, the anxieties, which may have attended a history of wrong on the part of the government, and of cruelty on the part of those who ought to have been brethren, ready with words of Christian sympathy and encouragement, and of fraternal love. I may, however, utter a single word. Those who have passed through trials and difficulties themselves, ought to have attained the practical knowledge to enable them to exercise confidence in and charity for their brethren who in like manner are called to suffer; and should sympathize rather than abuse.

Very truly yours,

Richmond, Va., Feb. 27th, 1873. E. T. BAIRD."

* [At the time he sold out he had net profits of over thirty thousand dollars a year from his *Gold and Stock Reporting Telegraph* business, which was established and growing beyond his power to supply the demand.—L.]

St. Louis, Mo.

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, Nov.* 15, 1872.]

"DR. LAWS' LETTER TO THE SYNOD OF MISSOURI.

Dr. Laws' Letter to the Synod of Missouri, which was sent out last week as a supplement to THE OLD SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN, is already in pamphlet form, and may be had *gratis*, on application at this office.

In giving an explicit answer to the two questions—"*How came the Synod of Missouri into its present position?*" and "*What is there to forbid its union with the Northern Assembly?*"—Dr. Laws ably reviews the controversy, not only vindicating the Synod completely, but also demonstrating that the Assembly, in the days of wild excitement, proceeded unscripturally and contrary to the law of the church, and (what is of vastly more serious moment) has, in these calmer times, persisted in and defended its wrong-doing, hedging it securely with ecclesiastical and civil sanctions.

The spirit of this letter—its manner of speech—is unexceptionable as its matter is unanswerable. The Doctor exemplifies *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*

An appendix contains the correspondence between the Reformed (Dutch) Church and the Southern Presbyterian Church, and also, that between the latter body and our own Synod.

We shall take great pleasure in sending this important document to all who wish it."

The present Pamphlet is a continuation of the Appendix of that *Letter.* The Pamphlet edition of 1000 copies of the Letter was almost immediately exhausted, but in response to numerous calls, a new edition of the Letter with the entire Appendix will probably soon be published.

3

No. 2, + 16 pages

AN OVERTURE

BY

A PRESBYTER:

To the Synods of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida—Greeting.

BRETAREN: By charter the Theological Seminary at Columbia, South Carolina, is under your control, and "a plan of government" formulates that control. The following regulation is found in that plan, section 3, art. 12:

ART. 12. Whenever a Professor shall hereafter become seventy years of age, he shall be retired at the close of that scholastic year, *unless* retained in office by an annual election in which he shall receive the votes of a majority of the Board. And when a Professor is thus retired, the Board is authorized to appropriate to him such stipend as it may deem proper.

It appears that there are two entirely different constructions placed on this "seventy-years" rule:

1. One view is that age is merely the occasion of re-election, with a presumption in favor of continuance, as a matter of course, if well qualified.

2. The other view is that when a Professor has attained or passed his seventieth year, this circumstance alone may be taken as a sufficient reason for retiring him, although his qualifications and devotion to his work may be of the highest order, his health and vigor uuimpaired, and his labors most faithful, efficient and acceptable.

Which of these is the view of the Synods? Doubtless the first, it might reasonably be said. But the purpose of this overture is to call forth an expression in answer to the question,—Which of these views, the first or the second, represents the mind of the members of the governing Synods?